TARBELL'S TEACHERS' GUIDE

TO THE

INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS

FOR 1916

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Teacher's Guide to the International Sunday School Lessons.-
1916.

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THE BREADTH OF MY LOVE. 1 Cor. 13, 13

From a Painting by Emily E. Collier

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TEACHERS' GUIDE

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TO THE
INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY-SCHOOL LESSONS
FOR 1916

MARTHA TARBELL, Ph.D.

James C. Hurst
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HOME DAILY BIBLE READINGS.

SELECTED BY THE INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY-SCHOOL LESSON COMMITTEE—AMERICAN SECTION

FIRST QUARTER

I. **M.** Acts 1.1-14. THE ASCENDING LORD.
T. John 20.11-18. THE ASCENSION FORETOLD.
W. 2 Kings 2.9-14. ASCENSION OF ELIJAH.
T. Psalm 24.1-10. ASCENDING INTO ZION.
F. Ephesians 4.7-16. GIFTS FROM THE ASCENDED LORD.
S. Revelation 22.8-16. THE GLORIFIED CHRIST.
S. Revelation 14.1-7. THE LAMB ON MOUNT ZION.

II. **M.** Acts 2.1-13. COMING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.
T. Joel 2.23-29. PROMISE OF THE SPIRIT.
W. Isaiah 44.1-8. SPIRITUAL REFRESHING.
T. John 16.7-15. OFFICE OF THE SPIRIT.
F. Psalm 139.1-12. EVERPRESENT SPIRIT.
S. John 14.16-26. THE COMFORTER.
S. 1 Corinthians 12.12-31. SPIRITUAL GIFTS.

III. **M.** Acts 2.14-24. PETER'S SERMON AT PENTECOST.
T. Acts 2.25-36. JESUS SUPREME.
W. Acts 2.37-47. RESULTS OF PETER'S SERMON.
T. Acts 5.29-40. A SEARCHING DISCOURSE.
F. Acts 11.1-18. GUIDED BY THE SPIRIT.
S. 1 Peter 1.3-16. SALVATION PROPHESIED.
S. 2 Peter 1.1-11. PRECIOUS PROMISES.

IV. **M.** Romans 8.12-17. THE SPIRIT OF LIFE.
T. Romans 8.18-30. WORK OF THE SPIRIT.
W. 1 Corinthians 2.1-10. REVEALS THE TRUTH.
T. Zechariah 4.1-14. SOURCE OF POWER.
F. Galatians 5.16-18, 22-25. FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT.
S. Romans 15.8-16. HOPE OF THE GENTILES.
S. Matthew 3.1-12. THE GREATER BAPTISM.

V. **M.** Acts 3.1-10. THE LAME MAN LEAPING.
T. Acts 3.11-26. IN THE NAME OF JESUS.
W. Isaiah 35.1-10. THE LAME SHALL LEAP.
T. Matthew 11.1-10. TESTIMONY OF JESUS' WORKS.
F. Luke 14.7-14. CONSIDERATION FOR THE NEEDY.
S. Luke 5.18-26. JESUS HEALS A PALSIED MAN.
S. James 5.13-20. CHRISTIAN HELPFULNESS.

VI. **M.** Acts 4.1-12. BOLDNESS OF PETER AND JOHN.
T. Acts 4.13-22. BOLDNESS OF OBEDIENCE.
W. Acts 4.23-31. PRAYER FOR HELP.
T. Ephesians 6.10-20. BOLDNESS IN PREACHING.
F. Daniel 3.13-25. BOLDNESS BY FAITH.
S. 1 Samuel 17.39-51. BOLDNESS BY CONFIDENCE.
S. Hebrews 4.9-16. MERCY THROUGH BOLDNESS.

VII. **M.** Philippians 2.1-11. HUMBLED AND EXALTED.
T. Genesis 18.22-33. HUMILITY OF ABRAHAM.
W. Exodus 3.1-12. HUMILITY OF MOSES.
T. Judges 6.11-18. HUMILITY OF GIDEON.
F. Matthew 8.5-13. HUMILITY OF THE CENTURION.
S. 2 Corinthians 12.1-10. HUMILITY OF PAUL.
S. Luke 18.9-14. HUMILITY IN PRAYER.

VIII. **M.** Acts 4.32-37. THE CHRISTIAN BROTHERHOOD AT JERUSALEM.
T. Acts 5.1-16. SELFISHNESS AND LYING.
W. Romans 15.1-9a. MUTUAL HELPFULNESS.
T. Galatians 6.1-10. FORBEARANCE AND HELPFULNESS.
F. Daniel 5.1-9. FEASTING AND FOLLY.
S. Mark 6.14-29. DEATH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.
S. Isaiah 28.1-8. CONDEMNED FOR DRUNKENNESS.

IX. **M.** Acts 6. SEVEN HELPERS.
T. Luke 10.1-9. SEVENTY SENT OUT.
W. Mark 6.4-13. TWO BY TWO.
T. Leviticus 26.3-13. THE DIVINE HELPER.
F. Philippians 4.1-7. FELLOW WORKERS.
S. Exodus 18.13-27. DIVISION OF LABOR.
S. Isaiah 41.8-16. THE SUPREME HELPER.

X. **M.** Acts 7.1-14. DEFENCE OF STEPHEN.
T. Acts 7.15-30. ISRAEL IN EGYPT.
W. Acts 7.31-41. MOSES THE DELIVERER.
T. Acts 7.42-50. THE DIVINE DWELLING-PLACE.
F. Acts 7.51—8.3. DEATH OF STEPHEN.
S. 2 Timothy 4.1-8. REWARD OF FAITHFUL WITNESS.
S. Psalm 91.1-12. HELP OF GOD.

XI. **M.** Hebrews 11.1-16. HEROES OF FAITH.
T. Hebrews 11.17-31. TRIUMPHS OF FAITH.

W. Hebrews 11.32—12.2. Martyrs of Faith.
T. Matthew 10.34-42. Price of Discipleship.
F. 1 Peter 4.12-19. Partakers of Christ's Suffering.
S. Jude 17-25. Security in God.
S. Hebrews 3. Psalm of Faith.

XII. M. Acts 8.4-13. The Gospel in Samaria.
T. Acts 8.14-25. Sin and Repentance.
W. Acts 8.26-40. Philip and the Ethiopian.
T. Jonah 1.1-10. A Disobedient Messenger.
F. Isaiah 19.18-25. Foreigners Converted.
S. Isaiah 60.1-9. Gentiles Follow the Gleam.
S. Ephesians 2.11-22. Gentiles become Fellow Citizens.

XIII. M. Acts 1.1-14. The Ascending Lord.
Acts 2.1-11. The Coming of the Holy Spirit.
T. Acts 2.20-24, 29-41. Peter's Sermon at Pentecost.
Romans 8.12-30. The Spirit of Life.
W. Acts 3.1-12. The Lame Man Leaping.
Acts 4.8-21. The Boldness of Peter and John.
T. Philippians 2.1-11. Humbled and Exalted.
Acts 4.32—5.5. The Christian Brotherhood at Jerusalem.
F. Acts 6.1-7. The Seven Helpers.
Acts 7.54—8.3. The Death of Stephen.
S. Hebrews 11.32—12.2. Heroes and Martyrs of Faith.
S. Acts 8.26-40. Philip and the Ethiopian.
Revelation 7.9-17. The Great Multitude.

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I. M. Acts 9.1-9. Vision of Jesus.
T. Acts 9.10-19. Conversion of Saul.
W. Acts 9.20-31. Effective Preaching.
T. 1 Timothy 1.12-17. Called to be an Apostle.
F. Galatians 1.11-17. Source of Paul's Gospel.
S. John 3.1-13. Agent of Conversion.
S. 2 Corinthians 5.14-21. A New Creature.

II. M. Acts 9.32-43. Æneas and Dorcas.
T. Proverbs 31.10-20. A Worthy Woman.
W. Proverbs 31.21-31. A Capable Woman.
T. John 5.2-9. Cure at Bethesda.
F. Matthew 15.21-31. The Great Healer.
S. 1 Kings 17.8-16. Generosity Rewarded.
S. Titus 2.1-14. Doctrine and Life.

III. M. Acts 10.1-16. Visions of Peter and Cornelius.
T. Acts 10.17-23. Peter Summoned.
W. Leviticus 11.1-12. Clean and Unclean Meats.
T. Daniel 7.9-14. Vision of the Kingdom.
F. Micah 4.1-5. All-inclusive Kingdom.
S. Romans 10.11-21. Salvation for All.
S. Revelation 21.1-7. The New Heaven and the New Earth.

IV. M. Acts 10.24-33. The Responsive Heart.
T. Acts 10.34-48. Gentiles Received.
W. Acts 11.1-18. Peter's Report.
T. Psalm 72.1-10. The Universal Kingdom.
F. Psalm 72.11-19. The Righteous King.
S. Zechariah 8.18-23. Flocking to Jehovah.
S. Jonah 4.1-11. Universality of Divine Love.

IV. M. 1 Corinthians 15.1-11. The Risen Christ.
T. 1 Corinthians 15.12-28. Resurrection Gospel.
W. Luke 24.13-24. Journey to Emmaus.
T. Luke 24.25-35. Recognition of the Risen Christ.
F. Psalm 16. The Dying Saint.
S. 1 Thessalonians 4.13-18. Resurrection of Saints.
S. 1 Corinthians 15.50-58. Resurrection Triumph.

V. M. Acts 12.1-10. Peter Delivered from Prison.
T. Acts 12.11-19. Prayer and Deliverance.
W. Psalm 46. God our Refuge.
T. Psalm 121. The Safety of the Godly.
F. Psalm 97. God Delivers his Own.
S. 2 Kings 6.8-18. Elisha Delivered.
S. 1 Kings 17.1-7. Divine Care.

VI. M. Acts 11.19-30. Missionaries of Antioch.
T. Acts 12.25—13.12. Mission in Cyprus.
W. Matthew 28.16-20. Apostolic Commission.
T. Isaiah 6.1-8. A Prophet's Commission.
F. 2 Kings 17.24-29. Mission to Samaria.
S. Jonah 3.1-10. Mission to Nineveh.
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W. Acts 13.40-52. Reception of Tidings.
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S. Luke 15.11-24. Lost and Found.

VIII. M. Acts 14.1-7. Persecution for Gospel's Sake.
T. Acts 14.8-20. The Cripple of Lystra.
W. Acts 14.21-28. Perseverance in the Gospel.
T. Mark 2.1-12. A Paralyzed Man.

F. Mark 3.20-30. A Mistaken Identity.
S. Psalm 50.7-15. Needless Sacrifice.
S. Romans 1.18-25. God's Witness of Himself.

IX. M. Acts 15.1-11. Council at Jerusalem.
T. Acts 15.12-21. Decision of the Council.
W. Acts 15.22-35. Decrees of the Council.
T. Galatians 5.1-6. Freedom from Bondage.
F. Mark 7.1-8. Source of Uncleanness.
S. Galatians 3.1-9. Gospel of Faith.
S. Romans 3.21-31. Righteousness by Faith.

X. M. Acts 15.36—16.5. Call of the West.
T. Acts 16.6-15. Obeying the Call.
W. Nehemiah 2.1-8. Nehemiah's Call.
T. Isaiah 45.1-7. Call of Cyrus.
F. Matthew 10.1-15. Call of Apostles.
S. 2 Timothy 2.20-26. Avoiding Contentions.
S. 2 Corinthians 4.7-18. Seeing Things Eternal.

XI. M. Galatians 6.1-18. Sowing and Reaping.
T. Matthew 13.24-30. Sowing Tares.
W. Ecclesiastes 11.1-8. Sowing on Waters.
T. Psalm 126. Joy of Harvest.
F. 1 Timothy 4.6-16. Sowing Good Seed.
S. Romans 14.13-23. Social Responsibility.
S. Romans 2.1-11. Life's Harvest.

XII. M. Acts 16.16-24. The Philippian Jailer.
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W. Acts 10.1-16. Peter and Cornelius.
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T. Acts 12.1-11. Peter Delivered from Prison.
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Acts 16.6-15. The Call of the West.
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W. 1 Thessalonians 3.1-10. Timothy's Report.
T. John 5.30-40. Testimony of Christ.
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S. 2 Timothy 3.10-17. Profitableness of Scripture.

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T. Philippians 3.1-12. Attaining the Resurrection.
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S. Luke 19.11-26. Working while Waiting.

III. M. Acts 17.16-21. Paul at Athens.
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W. Exodus 3.11-15. God's Name Declared.
T. Isaiah 44.6-20. Folly of Idolatry.
F. Hebrews 1.1-9. God Revealed in his Son.
S. Colossians 3.1-11. All Races Made One.
S. Ephesians 3.1-13. Dispensation of Grace.

IV. M. Acts 18.1-11. Paul at Corinth.
T. Acts 18.12-22. Paul Vindicated.
W. 1 Corinthians 1.10-17. Factions in Corinth.
T. 1 Corinthians 3.1-14. Foundations and Building.
F. 1 Corinthians 6.1-8. Lawsuits Condemned.
S. 1 Corinthians 9.16-27. All Things to All Men.
S. 2 Corinthians 7.2-12. The Happy Sequel.

V. M. 1 Corinthians 1.1-9. Called to be Saints.
T. 1 Corinthians 1.18—2.2. The Word of the Cross.
W. Isaiah 53.1-12. The Suffering Servant.
T. John 12.24-36. Need of the Cross.
F. Luke 10.17-24. Blessedness of Discipleship.
S. Ephesians 2.1-10. Saved by Grace.
S. Ephesians 2.11-22. Reconciled by the Cross.

VI. M. 1 Corinthians 13.1-13. The Greatest Thing in the World.
T. Romans 13.8-14. Love the Burden Sharer.
W. Matthew 22.34-40. Love a Social Obligation.
T. 1 Corinthians 8.1-13. For Sake of Others.
F. 1 John 2.7-17. Commandment of Love.

S. 1 John 4.7-21. Love Made Perfect.
S. 1 Peter 4.1-11. Evil affection versus Love.

VII. M. 2 Corinthians 9.1-15. Grace of Giving.
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S. 1 John 3.13-22. Loving by Giving.
S. Matthew 7.6-12. Giving as God Gives.

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S. Ephesians 1.1-14. Message to Ephesians.
S. Ephesians 6.10-20. Spiritual Conflict.

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T. Acts 20.7-15. Farewell Service at Troas.
W. Acts 20.16-27. Journeying to Jerusalem.
T. Acts 20.28-38. Exhortation to Overseers.
F. Ephesians 3.14-21. Prayer for Ephesians.
S. Ephesians 4.17-32. Putting on the New Man.
S. 2 Timothy 4.6-8, 14-18. Paul's Expectation.

X. M. 2 Corinthians 11.21-33. Paul's Sorrows and Comforts.
T. 2 Corinthians 12.1-10. All-sufficient Grace.
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T. Psalm 34.11-22. Jehovah the Deliverer.
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XI. M. Acts 21.1-14. Danger Foretold.
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S. Psalm 37.14-28. Jehovah's Protecting Care.
S. Psalm 37.29-40. Blessedness of Faith.

XII. M. Acts 22.1-16. Paul's Experience.
T. Acts 22.17-29. Prisoner in the Castle.
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T. Acts 4.5-12. A Bold Confession.
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S. Daniel 6.16-23. Reward of Fidelity.
S. Matthew 10.24-33. Encouragement in Persecution.

XIII. M. Acts 17.1-15. Paul at Thessalonica and Berœa.
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Acts 18.1-11. Paul at Corinth.
W. 1 Corinthians 1.18—2.2. The Word of the Cross.
1 Corinthians 13. The Greatest Thing in the World.
T. 2 Corinthians 9. The Grace of Giving.
Acts 19.29-41. The Riot at Ephesus.
F. Acts 20.16-27. Journeying to Jerusalem.
2 Corinthians 11.21-33. Paul's Sorrows and Comforts.
S. Acts 21.27-40. The Arrest of Paul.
Acts 22.17-29. A Prisoner in the Castle.
S. 2 Corinthians 4.1—5.4. The Things which are not Seen.

FOURTH QUARTER

I. M. Acts 23.1-13. The Plot.
T. Acts 23.14-24. Plot Made Known.
W. Isaiah 7.1-9. Futile Plotting.
T. Matthew 10.16-23. Comfort in Persecution.
F. Genesis 45.1-15. A Plot Overruled.
S. Psalm 3. Morning Prayer of Trust.
S. Psalm 4. Evening Prayer of Trust.

II. M. Acts 23.25-35. Committed to Felix.
T. Acts 24.1-9. Charge Presented.
W. Acts 24.10-21. Paul's Defence.
T. Acts 24.22-27. Paul in Bonds.
F. Matthew 26.57-68. Christ Before Sanhedrin.
S. Matthew 27.11-18. Christ before Pilate.
S. Matthew 27.19-26. A Cowardly Governor.

III. M. Acts 25.1-12. Appeal to Cæsar.
T. Acts 25.13-22. Agrippa Interested.
W. Acts 25.23-27. Paul Brought before Agrippa.
T. Isaiah 44.1-8. The Mighty God.
F. Psalm 42. The Supreme Helper.
S. Matthew 24.45-51. Faithful and Unfaithful Servants.
S. 2 Corinthians 5.1-10. The Righteous Judge.

IV. M. Acts 26.1-9. Saul the Persecutor.
T. Acts 26.10-18. Conversion of Paul.
W. Acts 26.19-32. Confession and its Effect.
T. John 1.19-28. John's Disclaimer.
F. John 1.29-34. Witnessing for the Master.
S. John 1.35-42. Effect of Faithful Witnessing.
S. 1 John 1.5—2.6. From Darkness to Light.

V. M. Acts 27.1-13. Voyage Begun.
T. Acts 27.14-26. Voyage Dangerous.
W. Acts 27.27-37. Calm amid Dangers.
T. 1 Kings 19.1-8. An Eventful Journey.
F. 1 Kings 19.9-14. Elijah sees God.
S. 1 Kings 19.15-21. Courage Restored.
S. Genesis 12.1-9. Journey of Faith.

VI. M. Acts 27.38-44. The Shipwreck.
T. Acts 28.1-10. Saved from Death.
W. Jonah 2.2-9. Song of Deliverance.
T. Psalm 18.6-20. The Mighty Deliverer.
F. Psalm 22.1-10. Cry of Anguish.
S. Psalm 22.11-21. Prayer for Deliverance.
S. Psalm 22.22-31. Song of Praise.

VII. M. Romans 14.13—15.3. Mutual Helpfulness.
T. Isaiah 58.6-12. Divine Requirements.
W. Matthew 5.38-48. Perfect Love.
T. Luke 10.25-37. Brotherly Love.
F. 2 Corinthians 6.14-18. Separation from Uncleanness.
S. James 1.12-18. Resisting Temptation.
S. Psalm 141. Prayer for the Tempted.

VIII. M. Acts 28.11-22. From Melita to Rome.
T. Acts 28.23-31. Preaching in Rome.
W. Genesis 39.19-23. An Innocent Prisoner.
T. Philippians 1.12-21. A Happy Prisoner.
F. 2 Timothy 1.7-18. Prisoner not Ashamed.
S. 2 Timothy 2.1-13. Suffering and Reigning.
S. 2 Timothy 4.9-18. Prison Hardships.

IX. M. Romans 12.1-8. A Living Sacrifice.
T. Romans 12.9-21. Christian Ideals.
W. Micah 6.1-8. Better than Sacrifice.
T. Isaiah 1.10-17. A Divine Standard.
F. Jeremiah 31.31-37. The New Covenant.
S. Hosea 6.1-6. Essence of Religion.
S. Matthew 5.1-12. The Ideal Christian.

X. M. Revelation 1.1-8. The First and the Last.
T. Revelation 1.9-20. The Living One.
W. Revelation 4.1-11. The Throne in Heaven.
T. Revelation 5.1-6. The Sealed Book.
F. Revelation 5.7-14. Worship of the Lamb.
S. Revelation 7.9-17. White-robed Multitude.
S. Revelation 19.1-10. Four-fold Hallelujah.

XI. M. Revelation 2.1-11. Faithful unto Death.
T. Revelation 2.12-17. Faithful in all Things.
W. Revelation 3.1-6. Exhortation to Watchfulness.
T. Revelation 3.7-13. Promise to the Faithful.
F. Revelation 3.14-22. Spiritual Fervor.
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S. Psalm 130. God's Forgiving Love.

XII. M. Revelation 21.1-14. The Holy City.
T. Revelation 21.22-27. Presence of God.
W. Revelation 22.1-5. River of Life.
T. Isaiah 60.10-22. Glory of Zion.
F. Isaiah 62.1-12. Zion Redeemed.
S. Isaiah 65.17-25. New Heavens and New Earth.
S. Revelation 20.11-15. The Final Judgment.

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T. Hebrews 2.1-8. The Great Salvation.
W. Hebrews 2.9-18. The Great Savior.
T. John 1.1-18. The Only Begotten Son.
F. Luke 2.41-51. The Father's Business.
S. Matthew 3.13-17. The Beloved Son.
S. Luke 2.1-14. The Son Born.

XIV. M. Isaiah 9.2-7. Unto Us a Son is Given.
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Acts 24.10-21. Paul before Felix.
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T. Acts 27.13-26. The Voyage.
Acts 27.33-44. Shipwrecked on Melita (Malta).
F. Romans 14.13—15.3. Mutual Helpfulness.
Acts 28.11-31. From Melita to Rome.
S. Romans 12. A Living Sacrifice.
Revelation 1.1-8, 17-20. Jesus Christ the First and the Last.
S. Revelation 2.1-17. Faithful unto Death.
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CHRONOLOGY

The dates of events recorded in the Acts can not be given with certainty. There is a difference of six years, for example, in the date assigned by various authorities to the conversion of Paul. The table below follows the chronology given by Professor Ramsay, and accepts the theory that Paul was released from the imprisonment at Rome recorded in the Acts and spent several years in journeys before his final martyrdom.

Ascension of Christ	A. D. 30
Death of Stephen	31 or 32
Conversion of Paul	33
First Visit to Jerusalem	35
First Missionary Journey	47–49
Apostolic Council	49 or 50
Second Missionary Journey	50–53
Third Missionary Journey	53–57
Arrest at Jerusalem	57
Imprisonment at Cæsarea	57–59
First Imprisonment at Rome	59–61
Last Journeys	61–65 or 67
Martyrdom at Rome	65 or 67

Roman Emperors

Augustus	B. C. 23 (or 31)–A. D. 14
Tiberius	A. D. 14–37
Caligula (Gaius)	37–41
Claudius	41–54
Nero	54–68

Rulers of Judæa

Herod the Great (King)	B. C. 37–B. C. 4
Archelaus (Ethnarch)	B. C. 4–A. D. 6
Four Successive Procurators	A. D. 6–26
Pontius Pilate (Procurator)	26–36
Two Successive Procurators	36–41
Herod Agrippa (King)	41–44
Three Successive Procurators	44–52
Antonius Felix (Procurator)	52–58
Porcius Festus (Procurator)	59?–61
Albinus (Procurator)	61–65
Gessius Florus (Procurator)	65–66

TARBELL'S TEACHERS' GUIDE

TO THE

INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY-SCHOOL LESSONS

FOR 1916

INTRODUCTION

SUGGESTIONS TO TEACHERS

The Year's Course: What it Is, and What it Should Accomplish. The entire book of the Acts is covered by our lessons this year, and we have also eleven lessons from the Epistles and three from the book of Revelation. The lessons from the Epistles are given either to enforce a lesson truth from the Acts, as in the fourth lesson of the first quarter where Paul's words about "the Spirit of Life" follow two lessons from Acts about the Holy Spirit, or to supplement the history of the Acts, as in the second lesson of the third quarter, where Paul's words to the Thessalonians follow the account in the Acts of the founding of the Church at Thessalonica. The lessons from Revelation conclude the course, and like the lessons from Acts, show us Christ living and reigning.

It is an intensely interesting and practical course. Do you know what the letters "H I" stand for, as they are scrawled with a blue pencil across many a reporter's copy when it comes back to him from the editorial office of some great daily newspaper? They stand for "Human Interest"; "Put human interest into your account," they mean. I do not ask you to put human interest into your teaching of this course, for you could not possibly teach these lessons and leave the human interest out. Peter was a very human apostle, and the struggle through which he passed before convinced that Christianity was for others as well as for Jews, grips the heart. The most human of all the apostles was Paul, the great hero around whom center three-fourths of our lessons, and no story of more thrilling human interest can be found than that of Paul and his missions whereby he made Christianity a world religion.

The greatest man that ever sailed the Mediterranean Sea was not Alexander, nor Hannibal, nor Cæsar; it was Paul. Paul was the most able, the most brilliant, the most forceful of all the apostles, yet these are not the qualities which have made him so real and interesting a personality to all generations throughout the nearly twenty centuries that have intervened between his life and ours. Rather is it the fact that in the record of his life and in his letters one sees an eager, strenuous, toiling *man,* beset with temptations and facing difficulties such as ordinary men of today have to meet who, like him, persistently strive for the attainment of high ideals.

Three things, at least, every teacher should accomplish by the end of the year's course. His pupils should have an understanding of how the Great Commission was carried out by the disciples after Christ's ascension, first by Peter and the Jerusalem group, and then by Paul, the great Apostle to the Gentiles; they should have a knowledge of Paul's life, more detailed in the older classes

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but clear in all; and they should become themselves fired with the desire and the will to make their own lives worth while, of service to God and man. Christianity for the apostles meant the Spirit of Christ reproduced in men's lives, and the thoughtful study of how they re-lived Christ must bear fruit in our lives.

The Book of Acts is pre-eminently a missionary book; each lesson has its missionary aspect. Of course you believe in missions,—but possibly you have as yet done little towards interesting your pupils in missions. "What do you think about this?" Mr. Moody once asked a Sunday-school superintendent in regard to a special plan which another had proposed. "Why, we've been aiming to do that for two years," replied the superintendent. "Well, don't you think it's about time you fired?" was Mr. Moody's quick rejoinder. You are on the missionary firing-line this year whether you will or no, and aiming is not enough—fire! Remember that the pupil who does not care about missions is the pupil who does not know about missions. This year's course should interest pupils of all ages in mission work, especially in Foreign Missions. Don't let this splendid opportunity be lost in your class. The Acts rightly taught shows God's missionary plan for the world, and each one's responsibility for doing his part toward carrying out God's plan.

Is this year's course adapted to primary grade pupils? Many questions in regard to Sunday-school teaching come to me, and perhaps I can make my prefatory talk to teachers helpful by answering some of them here. Other questions will be answered in the "Teacher-Training Thought" given with each lesson treatment.

The teacher of young pupils, eager to hold and influence them, will have no difficulty with the lessons which are stories of action, and the great majority of the lessons fall into this group. There are several selections from the Epistles and from Revelation which are not stories, and which must on first thought seem to you beyond your pupils' grasp. And so they are, in truth, if you think you must teach the entire lesson, or must attempt to trace Paul's or John's main idea and its development. Yet there is a thought in each lesson which is profitable for your pupils and one which you can easily make interesting.

A few suggestions will show this. Lesson I: let your theme be Why Jesus Went Away. Lesson II: talk about The Coming of the Helper, limiting your lesson to the first eight verses. Lesson III: teach Peter's sermon only in a general way, omitting all the prophetical references, making your theme Working with the Helper. Lesson IV: do not try to teach the text, but talk about its four great truths, that God is our Father, Jesus is our Elder Brother, we are the children of God, and are led by the Spirit of God. Lesson V: Gratitude. Lesson VI. Living Close to Jesus. Lesson VII: explain verses three and four and talk about ways in which your pupils can prefer others to themselves; make very simple the thought of verses 6-11, and talk about what the name of Jesus stands for. Lesson VIII: Love One Another. Lesson IX: Helpers. Lesson X: Forgiving. Lesson XI: omit the text from the eleventh chapter, limiting your lesson to the Golden Text and the remainder of the two verses of the twelfth chapter. Lessson XII: I Ought. Second Quarter, Lesson I: tell the story of Paul's life from the time that he was a child in Tarsus through the time of his escape over the wall of Damascus in a basket; let your theme be, Giving One's Life to the Savior. Lesson II: Good Deeds, limit your lesson to the story of Dorcas. Lesson III: All are God's Children. Lesson IV: Christ is Risen! tell your pupils about the first Easter Day, instead of teaching the text from First Corinthians. Lesson V: God's Care. Lesson VI: The New Name. Lesson VII: A Light. Lesson VIII: What we Owe God. Lesson IX: A Cure for Quarrels. Lesson X: A Great Need. Lesson XI: Helping Others; to teach so many separate exhortations to your pupils would be confusing; limit your lesson to verses two and seven. Lesson XII: Bearing Trouble.

On the first day that Froebel went to school the children repeated the words, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousnesss, and all these things shall be added unto you." Would you say that this verse is especially adapted to your pupils' understanding? Yet Froebel says that the verse was explained and on each day of that week was repeated again and again by the children in chorus or in sections until the words and the sense had produced so strong an impression upon the small boy that he made them the motto of his life.

Any lesson from the Book of Revelation might seem at first thought beyond the grasp of Primary Grade Pupils, but the Rev. S. D. Gordon gives this instance which shows that little folks can understand more than one might think. The Book of Revelation was being read at family devotions, when one day the small nephew who was visiting there observed, "Satan will have two great punishments, won't he?" His aunt was surprised, and sought to draw out his thoughts. "He will be put into the pit and then into the lake of fire," the child said. His aunt thought it would be profitable to instruct him further, and how well she succeeded is sugggested by the little fellow's remark as he was going to bed one night. As though talking to himself he said, "Satan is very strong, we can't do anything against him." Then his face brightened, and his tone of voice completely changed, as he said, "But with Jesus, we are a hundred times stronger. Oh, I should say, with Jesus we are a thousand times stronger." That was wholesome reading and instruction for the child, Mr. Gordon thinks. The definite impressions of the greatness of the foe, and of the greater power of our Lord, and that that power is ours, will be of great value to him as he grows in his Christian life.

I have a class of senior (or adult) pupils: how shall I interest them in this course? When Robert Raikes, the Gloucester printer, gathered his first Sunday-school, now more than one hundred and thirty years ago, he had no thought that later schools would consist of any other than poor and neglected children. But the institution has far outgrown the plans and thoughts of its founders. Not only do the Sunday-schools of the world provide for the religious education of children of the rich as well as of the poor, but they provide for systematic religious instruction of pupils of all ages, the Sunday-school having become the strongest and most vital of all the agencies of the Church.

"The teaching of an adult class is one of the very hardest stunts that a man or woman can take hold of," is the way that one Christian worker states the fact. "To build up and maintain a successful men's (or women's) class requires adaptability, brains, energy in abundance, and plenty of perseverance and optimism. Of course it is worth while, it is one of the most needed things in every church, but it will never be done until some one man at the center of it, and other men about him, are ready to do a big lot of hard work, and keep it up year after year."

Since your work requires so much from you, you will rejoice that this year's course requires no effort on your part to make its teaching interesting. If there is any difficulty here it is to know, not what to teach, but what to omit from all the wealth of information at hand. To connect the familiar Old Testament lessons with the life of to-day and give them a practical value demands thought: to present the very familiar Gospel lessons in a fresh light demands thought: but to teach the Acts and the Epistles, with which your class is not too familiar, and which fairly glisten with their appeals to men and women to be up and doing, is an easy task.

Use the lecture method occasionally only. Use the topical method largely. Tell your class the week before what the topic is, that they may come prepared to share in the discussion. Don't forget the stories. You will find them in *The Guide*. Don't neglect the blackboard. A synopsis of your lesson plan, an outline of the lesson text, a sketch map, these and many other things may be helpfully placed before the eyes of your class.

What use should a teacher make of a lesson help like the "Teachers' Guide"? To all who use this or any other "Help," I would say, First of all survey the year's course. It is given here on pages 3, 4. Then read the book of Acts *through*, to gain a knowledge of our text-book as a whole. Does this seem too great a requirement? You can read it through slowly and thoughtfully in a Sunday afternoon. It has only twenty-eight short chapters, covering thirty-six pages in all in the Revised Version. Would you hesitate about reading consecutively thirty-six pages of your favorite author? One can not be said to know a work of literature who has not read it through. No one is qualified to speak upon one of Shakespeare's works who is familiar only with the parts oftenest quoted. No teacher should attempt to teach the Acts or any other book in the Bible who knows only certain sections of it.

As you read the Acts through, keep your class in mind, and from your reading gain not only a clear idea of the book's purpose and scope, but also of what

its messages are for your pupils. After you have read the book for yourself, read what is said about it on pages 23-27 of this *Guide.* Check the portions which you think your pupils should know. See the suggestion on p. 21 in regard to pupils' work.

Similar should be your practice before taking up a lesson from any other book in the course. Romans, the longest of Paul's Epistles, has only sixteen chapters. Would you think of reading a sixteen-page letter a paragraph only at a time?

A teacher's first study of every lesson should be an independent one. Re-read the last lesson, and then the text which follows it in the Bible until you have covered what comes between the two lessons as well as the full text of the lesson you are about to study. Having gained for yourself a knowledge of the connection between the two lessons, read what is said about this in the *Guide* under the heading "The Historical Background." The latter will either re-inforce your own knowledge, or cast a new light upon the trend of things.

Now study the lesson text in your Bible to get its meaning. Read the footnotes and look up the marginal references. Do some vigorous thinking. Make notes of what you will need to explain in class, consider what is the main lesson truth for your pupils, and plan your questions. After you have done all this, study "The Lesson Text Explained and Illumined" in *The Guide.* Perhaps you will then modify some of your views, or will see a deeper meaning in the text than you could gain from your limited study. If you have not spent years of time upon the study of the Bible you may be like the Ethiopian treasurer in one of our early lessons, who, when Philip asked him if he understood what he was reading from the prophet Isaiah, replied, "How can I, except some one shall guide me?"

This book will not spare you the trouble of studying the lesson, but it will make all your study time count. It has focussed upon the text the information and illustration and teaching methods which your study will adapt to your class needs.

How shall I begin the lesson so as to gain the attention of my pupils from the very start? A newspaper reporter refers to the moment in the church service when the audience settles itself in expectancy, eyes focussed on the preacher, as he steps to the front of the platform. What will he say? he questions. Surely a striking sentence, something that will crystallize the attention into interest, carry the audience into the heart of the discourse. Any newspaper man knows that the story is made or lost in the first half-dozen words. The preacher opens his mouth and says—what? "Matthew, the sixth chapter and the twenty-eighth verse. Consider the lilies of the field how they grow. They toil not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Matthew, sixth chapter and twenty-eighth verse." The whole crowd settles back dejectedly. The deed is done; interest has been deliberately murdered on the altar; to revive it now will require an almost superhuman exertion.

And then the reporter tells how a newspaper man would crystallize the attention into interest. Ponder his method of attack for that sermon theme. "Nearly everybody of any importance in Capernaum was there. It was a cosmopolitan gathering. Here on one side, drawing their flowing robes back so that the crowd might not soil them, were the proud Pharisees. Enveloping them were the common people, their bright-hued garments painting the hillside until from a distance it seemed to be covered by a great Turkish rug. It had been hot on the pavements of the city, and the promise of a cool wind over the hills had proved very inviting.... The new preacher is in the midst of the crowd and now, while they are hanging on his words, he stops a moment, and reaching out his hand, picks a lily and holds it out to them." The reporter thinks such a beginning compares very favorably in interest with "Matthew six, twenty-eight."

Now while there is such a thing as the necessary tyranny of the text in the church service, and the reporter's words may not apply to the preacher, they certainly do to the teacher who begins a lesson period with a statement of the book and the chapter and a reading of the verses. With each lesson treatment in *The Guide* two suggestions are given for a beginning which will secure the attention and interest of pupils from the start. Sometimes you may prefer

to begin with the historical background of the lesson, or with the map, or with some striking remark or question that compels thought.

My pupils' minds wander from the lesson: how can I keep them interested throughout the period? Inattentive pupils are uninterested pupils, and they are uninterested because their teacher does not arouse their interest. Dullness is a teacher's unpardonable sin.

Experiments have proved that strong-minded adults can by an effort of the will give their attention for only a brief space of time to that in which they are not interested. We can not expect children to exert any will power whatever along this line; their attention can only be held by giving them what they deem worthy of attention. A listless manner on your part will not enlist a wide-awake interest on their part. Be alive, earnest and enthusiastic, and your spirit will be contagious. Remember, too, that in order to be successfully enthusiastic you must be genuinely enthusiastic. This you can only be when you are thoroughly interested in your pupils' welfare, and, having thoroughly prepared your lesson, know how much it holds for them.

Let me mention in this connection a danger which is always present in Sunday-school teaching, the tendency to talk about what greatly interests us, rather than what would interest and influence our pupils. Recently I heard a college professor give a model lesson about Paul's voyage and shipwreck, for the purpose of showing a roomful of teachers how to teach it the following Sunday. He was himself intensely interested in the size and shape of the boat, the direction and velocity of the winds, and the prevailing currents of the Mediterranean; he dwelt upon these things lovingly, but at such length that there was time for no other lesson thought. He had thoroughly enjoyed the hour. Another teacher confessed that his teaching of Paul's address at Mars Hill had "fallen flat", because he knew the incident so well and liked it so much that he forgot to seek in it a point of contact for his boys, and he declared that he could never again think of the Stoics or Epicureans without reflecting that to the boy of thirteen they are only Greeks—until we make them real, everyday people of the town in which he lives, and possibly of the school to which he belongs. The lesson period is the teacher's opportunity to interest his pupils, not his opportunity to interest himself. If he will frequently ask himself, How would I, at my pupils' age, have appreciated the circumstances of this event, or felt toward this deed, or grasped this teaching? he will avoid the danger of entertaining himself, instead of teaching his pupils.

Shall I teach the entire book we are studying, or only the selected lessons? To younger classes teach the Book of Acts as a continued story, to older classes, as a continuous history. There should be no chaotic teaching of isolated events in classes beyond the Beginners or early Primary Grades. Gain yourself a masterful familiarity with the history. Train your historical imagination, so that you can put yourself in the place where events took place and see them as they happened. Correlate the lessons with secular history, if your pupils know about European history. One thing which makes these lessons so much more real to all pupils than those of almost any other part of the Bible is the fact that secular history has made us more familiar with Asia Minor and Macedonia and Greece and Rome than it has with Palestine.

How can I interest my pupils in the geographical setting of the lesson? You must make three resolves: first, never to teach an event without having it localized; second, never to tell your pupils where it occurred but let them tell you; third, never to be satisfied with a verbal location of a new place, but to have it pointed out on the map. Your pupils will gain from the study of maps and descriptions of places what Dr. Johnson tells us we gain from traveling, the opportunity of regulating imagination by reality, and instead of thinking how things *may be,* of seeing them as they *are.*

The Book of Acts is a book of cities; first Jerusalem; then Samaria and Antioch in Syria; and then Antioch of Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra and Ephesus in Asia Minor; Philippi, Thessalonica and Berœa in Macedonia; Athens and Corinth in Greece; and at last Rome. Paul's life was that of a missionary bishop, travelling from one city to another, and it cannot be intelligently taught without a knowledge of the geography of the Eastern Mediterranean World. Fortunately, this study of geography in connection with the spread of Christianity is a fascinating one. Some of the very streets and buildings of cities

where Paul sojourned have been traced in recent years. Keep the map constantly before the class and follow in Paul's footsteps from place to place. Correlate the geography of the first century with the political geography of today. When Paul is at Thessalonica, make sure that your pupils know that was the city which today is called Salonika and was so prominent in the war between Turkey and the Balkan States; when he reaches Corinth refer to the modern revival of the ancient games there; when he is at Athens, ask your pupils about other orators who held the Athenians spell-bound.

Provide your pupils with outline maps of the Mediterranean World. Still better than the printed outline maps are those which your pupils themselves draw, for in the drawing they are learning and remembering its outline. Then week by week let them locate the places mentioned. These maps will be used so constantly that they may well be fastened with thumb tacks to map boards. When you come to Paul's journeys, have the names of the cities where he founded churches written with a black pencil; the names of cities through which he passed without staying, with a green pencil; and beneath the name of a city where he wrote an Epistle let the name of the Epistle be written with a blue pencil. Trace with a red pencil Paul's missionary journeys, using a different map for each journey and a fourth one for his journey to Rome.

I am not an artist: what use can I make of the blackboard? There is no class, whether of children or of adults, in which the blackboard is not a most useful adjunct. In children's classes, the sketching of the lesson picture each week (given in *The Guide* with the review lesson for each quarter) will greatly interest pupils and help to fasten the lesson in mind. For such outline pictures as these no skill is necessary, and if you do not make them look as well as the copy, even if you let a straight line represent a man, you will have accomplished your purpose. In such classes frequently write words upon the board, keep a list of the places of the lessons, of the heroes of the lessons, of the truths of the lessons. Write the Bible verse or the sentence or stanza which you wish committed to memory.

The diagrams furnished by the various missionary societies tell the story in a striking way. Draw one on your board. If you are not so fortunate as to have a room and a blackboard of your own, draw it upon a large piece of cardboard and hold it for your pupils to see as you talk. A seven-year old lad was present at a missionary meeting many years ago. The lecture did not interest him, and he was paying no heed until a chart was shown. There he saw a great black circle with a tiny white spot in the center. He listened to hear what it meant. "That black circle represents the millions who are living in the darkness of heathenism, and that little white spot is the handful of Christians that are to be found in pagan lands." The boy heard no more, but was absorbed in thought the remainder of the evening. "That night," he said long afterwards, "I knelt down and said the prayer my mother had taught me, and then I added these words of my own: 'O Lord, let me get to be a big man, and I will work to make that white spot a little larger, that there may be not so much black, and that there may be a little more white'".

In older classes, make constant use of the blackboard for maps, diagrams, outlines, summaries, etc. Are you speaking of the order in which Paul's Epistles were written? Write them on the board in that order and they will be remembered. Do some of your class stumble over the printed order of the Epistles which follow Corinthians? Write them on the board and underscore the first two vowels of each: *Gal*atians, *Eph*esians, *Phil*ippians, *Col*ossians.

My pupils dislike reviews; how can I make the Review Sundays worth while? Possibly you have not presented the review lessons in the right light, and your pupils consider them only tiresome examination days. Do they associate the lesson and the reviews in line with De Morgan's catechism?

Question. What is knowledge?
Answer. Something to be examined upon.
Question. What is the object of the examination?
Answer. To show the lessons have been learned.
Question. What is the object of learning lessons?
Answer. To have something to be examined upon.

Don't wait for Review Sunday before recalling earlier lessons. The human mind is like a palimpsest—on the same surface things are written over and over,

and the earlier records easily disappear. Unless one goes over what he has learned, thus making the impression deeper each time, it will grow dim or disappear altogether. Therefore review often.

Reviews are not tiresome to those who are familiar with the subject matter covered. Let the review lesson be to your pupils an inspiration, a vantage ground whence they may look over the way they have come and gain inspiration for the path ahead. If your pupils have a deep-seated dislike for Review Sunday, try them the first quarter with the allusions given on p. 150. If they can answer them correctly they will enjoy them; if they can not, they will wish to do better the next quarter. Make your reviews varied; there should be no more monotony on Review Sunday than on other days. Various review plans are given in *The Guide* for each quarter, and no two Review Sundays need be alike.

My pupils will not study their lessons nor talk in class: what can I do about it? Do not say that you can not help it and settle into the habit of lecturing upon the lesson instead of teaching it. That is the easiest way—but the poorest.

You will find that boys or girls, men or women, will talk about things of which they have some knowledge. If you can secure home study, the talking in class will follow, or if you ask questions that connect the lesson with every-day life, you will have interesting and helpful class discussions.

But how can you make your pupils study? You can not make them. Do not demand home study—encourage it. You may have a class to whom the suggestion in the following dialogue will appeal. "If the teacher would make the lesson as interesting as the professor does my chemistry," said a High school lad, "I wouldn't stay away from Sunday-school." "How much time do you give to preparing the Sunday-school lesson?" his friend questioned. "Two hours, as you do your chemistry? No? How long would your chemistry professor expect to keep up the enthusiasm of his classes if no one came prepared?" "Boys never look at a Sunday-school lesson." "Why don't you try the experiment and see what the result will be?"

Do not merely patiently encourage home study—expect it. Commend it, however far it falls short of the ideal. Do not expect home study "in general". It is possible that your pupils, even though of High School age or adults, do not know how to "study the lesson." Make a definite assignment of work each week. Give each pupil a few (not too many) questions to look up, or to think about, from the list given in *The Guide* with each lesson. If they are capable of finding the answers without the Bible references, do not give the latter. If they are too young for these questions, ask simpler ones which can be answered from the lesson text. Give one pupil the Historical Background, another the Geographical Background, a third a story that enforces the lesson truth, a fourth an explanation of the text or a quotation that illumines the thought (all of these may be clipped or copied from *The Guide*). Having asked for definite home study, do not fail the next week to call upon the right pupils for the information.

Intermediate, senior and adult pupils should gain this year a thorough knowledge of the Acts and of the Epistles from which we have lessons, the circumstances which led to their writing, their purpose, contents, literary style, and lessons for today. The information given on pages 23-50 of our Introduction may be dictated or told.

Every pupil should keep a note book in which each week after the lesson has been taught he writes the lesson story or pursues some other line of work adapted to his interests. Young pupils may write the title and golden text at the head of a sheet of paper, then write the lesson story, and add a picture cut from their lesson quarterly or one of the penny pictures, or draw something that will recall the lesson, as a crutch for lesson V, a coin for lesson VIII, a table for lesson IX, stones for lesson X, a chariot or a book for lesson XII. The twelve sheets for the quarter should be fastened together with a decorated cover on the outside. Older pupils should write a History of the Expansion of the Early Church and a Life of Paul. See the suggestions for Note-Book Work given with each lesson.

Memory work should not be neglected. Jerome, advising Laeta concerning the education of her little daughter Paula, counseled that Paula begin by learning the Psalter, then, after she had enriched her mind by the treasures of Proverbs, Job, the Gospels, Acts and the Epistles, he adds, "Let her commit to memory the

prophets, the Heptateuch (*i. e.* the Pentateuch with Joshua and Judges), the books of Kings and of Chronicles, the rolls also of Ezra and Esther." Shall we be content with the memorizing of one verse—the Golden Text—each week?

What books do you recommend in connection with this year's course? There are three translations of the New Testament which often throw a special light upon the interpretation of the text: Dr. James Moffatt's "A New Translation of the New Testament" (Doran, $1.50); Dr. R. F. Weymouth's "Modern Speech New Testament" (Pilgrim Press, $1.00), and "The Twentieth Century New Testament" (Revell, $.85.)

For teachers of young pupils, Robert Bird's "Paul of Tarsus" (Thomas Nelson and Sons, $2.00) and Dr. J. R. Miller's "Paul's Message for Today" (Doran, $1.25) are the best books.

Books upon the life of Paul are many. The three best ones are still Conybeare and Howson's "Life and Epistles of St. Paul" (Revell, $1.50); Professor Ramsay's "St. Paul the Traveler and Roman Citizen" (Putnams, $3.00); and Farrar's "Life and Work of St. Paul" (Dutton, $2.00). Other books about Paul especially worth while are Dr. F. B. Meyer's "Paul, a Servant of Jesus Christ" (Revell, $.50); Christopher N. Johnston's "St. Paul and His Mission to the Roman Empire" (Revell, $.75); Lewin's "Life of Paul" (Dutton, $2.00); Dr. A. T. Robertson's "Epochs in the Life of Paul" (Scribner's, $.50); Maurice Jones' "St. Paul the Orator" (Doran, $1.50); Dr. A. E. Garvie's "Studies of Paul and his Gospel" (Doran, $1.50); J. G. Greenhough's "The Mind of Christ in St. Paul" (Doran, $1.50); Dr. A. B. Bruce's "St. Paul's Conception of Christianity" (Scribner's, $.90).

Then there are Professor Ramsay's other books, which contain most valuable contributions to our subject, although they are somewhat too discursive for the average teacher: "The Church in the Roman Empire before 170 A. D.", (Putnam, $3.00); "Pauline and Other Studies" (Doran, $1.50); "The Cities of St. Paul" (Doran, $1.50); "Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia" (Doran, $1.50); "Pictures of the Apostolic Church" (Sunday School Times, $1.50); "The First Christian Century" (Doran, $.75); "The Teaching of Paul in Terms of the Present Day" (Doran, $3.00).

Among the best books upon the Apostolic Age are: Dr. George T. Purves' "Christianity in the Apostolic Age" (Scribner's, $1.25); Dr. McGiffert's "History of Christianity in the Apostolic Age (Scribners, $2.50); Vernon Bartlett's "Apostolic Age" (Scribner's, $2.00); Professor Oliver J. Thatcher's "Sketch of the History of the Apostolic Church" (Houghton, Mifflin and Co., $1.25); Dr. Stifler's "Introduction to the Book of Acts" (Revell, $.75); Professor George B. Stevens' "Messages of Paul" (Scribner's, $1.25); G. H. Gilbert's "Short History of Christianity in the Apostolic Age".

In addition to the well-known commentaries upon the text of the Acts, the Epistles, and Revelation, these books are especially helpful: Frederick D. Maurice's "Acts of the Apostles" (Macmillan, $1.25); Dr. Lyman Abbott's "Life and Letters of Paul" (Houghton, Mifflin and Co., $1.50); The Acts and the Epistles in "The Expositor's Bible" (Doran, $.50 each), and in Dr. Maclaren's "Expositions of Scripture" (Doran, $1.25 each), Dr. F. Godet's "Studies on the Epistles of St. Paul (Doran, $.50); F. B. Meyer's "The Way into the Holiest"—Hebrews—(Revell, $.50); Dr. J. H. Jowett's "The High Calling"—Philippians—(Revell, $1.25); Dr. Charles Hodge's "Epistles to the Corinthians" (Doran, $.50 net each); C. Anderson Scott's "Book of the Revelation" (Doran, $.50); Dr. Francis E. Clark's "The Holy Land of Asia Minor"—The Seven Churches of Revelation—(Scribner's, $1.00).

THE BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

The Books. The New Testament consists of twenty-seven books; the four Gospels, the historical book of the Acts, the twenty-one letters, and the Apocalypse or Revelation.

The Authors. The twenty-seven books were probably written by nine authors, all of them Jews save Luke. Two of the four Evangelists who wrote the Gospels wrote also other books; Luke wrote the Acts, and to John are generally ascribed the three Epistles, First, Second, and Third John, and the book of Revelation. Paul wrote thirteen of the letters, the Pauline Epistles as they are called; the author of Hebrews is unknown; and of the seven General Epistles, one is ascribed to James, two to Peter, three to John, and one to Jude. Three of these nine authors were among the twelve apostles chosen by Jesus—Matthew, John and Peter. Two, James and Jude, were apparently his brothers. Paul was especially called to his work by the Risen Christ. Mark is called by one of the early Christian writers the "Interpreter of Peter"; he was a companion of both Peter and Paul. Luke and probably the writer of Hebrews were companions of Paul.

The Themes. The Gospels tell us what Jesus the Christ did and said, they reveal the religion of Christ through his life and teachings. The Acts and the Epistles tell us what was the effect of Christ's life and teaching upon apostles and disciples, what Christ continued to do and to teach, as Luke says, through others, the Acts being a revelation of the acts of his disciples in extending his teachings, the Epistles being a revelation of the application of his teachings to individual and church life. Revelation proclaims the ultimate triumph of the faith in Jesus the Christ.

The Order. The order in which the books are given in the New Testament is not the order in which they were written. Because the events of Christ's life precede those of the early Christian Church, the Gospels naturally precede the Epistles in the New Testament arrangement, but we must not make the mistake of supposing that the Gospels in their present form were the earliest written of the New Testament books. Many scholars believe that the Epistle of James was the first in chronological order, but some scholars assign it to a later date. With this possible exception, the Pauline Epistles were the earliest written. The Synoptic Gospels were probably written before and the Gospel of John after, the Acts.

THE ACTS

The Title. In the Authorized Version the title given this book is "The Acts of the Apostles." The words *of the Apostles* are lacking in the Sinaitic manuscript, and were probably added in other manuscripts by the copyist. The book is not an account of the acts of the apostles; it tells of the acts of Paul, the great Apostle to the Gentiles, but aside from the list of the twelve apostles given in 1.13 only two, Peter and James, are mentioned again. I like the title given the book by a black man in Africa with whom Dan Crawford consulted; it has, as he says, a thrill in it—*Words concerning Deeds.*

By Whom Written. Two theories are held in regard to the authorship of Acts. Some scholars believe that it was edited by an unknown writer of the second century from several documents, among them the "Travel Documents" which were probably written by Luke. The majority of scholars believe that Luke was the writer of the entire book.

The book itself does not name the writer. He, however, in his introductory sentence, tells us that it is a continuation of a former work; he addresses it to a certain Theophilus, to whom also the Third Gospel is addressed; and the Acts resembles the Third Gospel in vocabulary and style. The early Christian writers speak of Luke as the author of both the Third Gospel and the Acts. The occasional use of the pronoun *we* shows that the writer was at times a companion of Paul on his journeys. From Paul's letters, which give the names

of his chief companions and certain facts concerning them, it is seen that Luke must have been the companion who was with Paul on all the occasions recorded in the Acts in the "We-portions," or "Travel Documents," as they are called. These "Travel Documents" include the journey from Troas to Philippi, Acts 16.10-17; from Philippi to Jerusalem, Acts 20.5-21.18; and from Jerusalem to Rome, Acts 27.12-28.16. The first part of the history he could hear from others; the greater portion of the second part he knew from his own experience. It has been shown that for all events in which Luke himself did not participate it is possible to point to a particular occasion on which he either visited the places where they occurred and therefore came in contact with those who could give first-hand testimony, or met the persons about whom the events are narrated.

Luke was a Greek by birth, and a physician by profession. Not only was he Paul's companion on many journeys, but he was with Paul in Rome when he wrote Colossians and Philemon, and was his sole companion and friend when he wrote his second Epistle to Timothy shortly before his death. Luke is mentioned by name but three times in all the New Testament; and each time by Paul, who calls him "the beloved physician." It is interesting to recall that a physician in the Roman world was a man of culture, and he was also a man of means, if we rely on Pliny's statement that the practice of medicine was the most lucrative of all the professions of his day.

The Date. Great divergence of opinion exists as to the probable date when this history was written. It was known in Rome (as the First Epistle of Clement shows) by 95 A. D. Because it contains no reference to the destruction of Jerusalem its date is placed by some before 70 A. D., but this inference is not conclusive. Because it records the first imprisonment of Paul at Rome its date may be given as subsequent to 63 A. D.

The Purpose of the Book. The book is not a biography of the apostles. It is not an account of the acts, or lives, of even Peter and Paul. Peter disappears from the record after the fifteenth chapter, not because his work has ceased, but because the progress of Christianity left Peter and the Jewish field on one side and developed under Paul in the Gentile field.

The Acts is the history of the expansion of the early church. It is the story of men who had learned of Christ and were fulfilling his commission to teach the world. In his introduction Luke declares the purpose of his writing, and gives the three keynotes by which it is to be understood. As his former work, his Gospel, is a record of all that Jesus *began* both to do and to teach until he was received up, so this work is (1) a record of what Jesus *continued* to do and to teach through his followers. Jesus had commanded them to be his witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria—and unto the uttermost part of the earth. The Acts records (2) how this command was fulfilled. This command to preach the gospel was given "through the Holy Spirit," and it is through the power of the Holy Spirit that the command is obeyed. The Acts has been called (3) "the Gospel of the Holy Spirit," for his guidance is recognized at every step.

In the course of his narrative, Luke plainly shows the growth of Christianity from a Jewish sect to a world-wide religion; the freeing of Gentile Christianity from Jewish law; and the supreme greatness of Paul, whose "acts" occupy three-fifths of the book.

No attempt is made to write a complete account of events. Some events are described with great fulness, some are but briefly mentioned, and some are omitted entirely. There is no record of the spread of the Gospel in Egypt or the farther East, nothing about the founding of the church at Rome, no word in regard to the later life of Peter, the trial and death of Paul, the persecution under Nero, or the destruction of Jerusalem.

Professor Ramsay thinks that "the former treatise" (Acts 1.1) means the first of a series of three, and that Luke's purpose was to write a third treatise dealing with the progress of the gospel from Rome. The ending of the book is, in truth, unsatisfactory, but it is a logical ending in that Luke fulfilled his purpose as given in his introduction. When Paul preached the gospel in Rome, the capital of the Roman world, the knowledge of Christ had been spread, prophetically at least, to the "uttermost part of the earth."

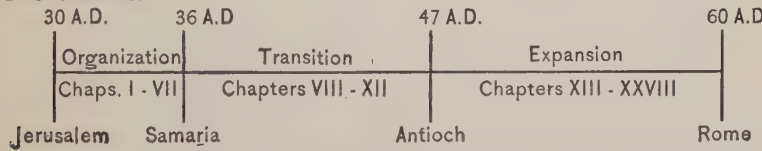
The Character of the Book. It is turbulent, tumultuous history which the

book records; but it is a record of triumphant achievements in spite of Jewish jealousy, prejudice and persecution, pagan opposition, and Roman power. The theme of the preaching is Jesus Christ. The triumphant onward march of the gospel is under the generalship of God himself, his messengers are commissioned by the Son, and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

"Jesus is dominant in the Gospels; the Spirit of Jesus in the Acts. He is the only continuous Personality from first to last. The first twelve chapters group about Peter, the remaining sixteen about Paul, but distinctly above both they all group about the Holy Spirit. He is the one dominant factor throughout. The first fourth of the book is fairly aflame with his presence at the center—Jerusalem. Thence out to Samaria, and through the Cornelius door to the whole outer non-Jewish world; at Antioch the new center, and thence through the uttermost parts of the Roman empire into its heart, his is the Presence recognized and obeyed. He is ceaselessly guiding, empowering, inspiring, checking, controlling, clear to the abrupt end. And everywhere his presence is a transforming presence. Nothing short of startling is the change in Peter, in the attitude of the Jerusalem thousands, in the persecutor Saul, in the spirit of these disciples, in the unprecedented and unparalleled unselfishness shown. It is revolutionary. Ah! it was meant to be so. This book is the living illustration of what Jesus meant by his teaching regarding his successor. It becomes also an active illustration of what the personal Christian life is meant to be. This explains the indomitable energy, the fervent devotion, whereby through trial and temptation, his disciples entered into triumph, and were able to win for the Redeemer, from east to west, form north to south, those rich triumphs of grace, of lives changed, and consecrated to the glory of God and his kingdom. Well may the Acts be called the Gospel of the Holy Spirit."

The Reliability of the Book. Bishop Lightfoot has pointed out that the veracity of no ancient writing is so well tested as that of the Acts, because no other has such numerous points of contact in all directions with contemporary history, politics, and topography, whether Jewish or Greek or Roman. The history of the Acts covers a period of thirty years, enacted in Syria, Asia Minor, Greece and Italy. During that time political changes were frequent, and yet Luke is never found at fault, whether writing of imperial provinces or senatorial provinces, of proconsuls, procurators, politarchs, asiarchs, or prætors, or of the Sanhedrin and Herodian princes and rulers of synagogues. Recently discovered inscriptions have proved him correct where formerly his statements were doubted.

The Outline.



I. Introduction. 1.1-5.

II. The Early Christian Community at Jerusalem, under the Leadership of Peter. 1.6-8.1.

1. Preparation for Work. 1.1-2.42.
   a. The Commission and the Ascension. 1.6-11.
   b. Waiting for the Coming of the Spirit. 1.12-26.
   c. The Coming of the Spirit at Pentecost. 2.1-13.
   d. Peter's Discourse and its Results. 2.14-42.
2. Early Ministry. 2.43-8.1.
   a. Unity of the Church. 2.43-47.
   b. Cure of the Lame Beggar at the Temple. 3.1-10.
   c. Peter's Discourse and Arrest and Trial of Peter and John. 3.11-4.31.
   d. All Things Held in Common; Gift of Barnabas; Gift of Ananias and Sapphira and their Punishment. 4.32-5.11.
   e. Believers Multiplied; Apostles again Imprisoned are Divinely Liberated. Gamaliel's advice. 5.12-42.
   f. The Choosing of the Seven. 6.1-6.
   g. The Martyrdom of Stephen. 6.7-8.1.

III. Evangelization in Judea, Samaria and Syria under the Leadership of Philip, Peter and Barnabas. 8.2-11.30.
1. The Church Persecuted and Scattered. 8.1-4.
2. The Ministry of Philip. 8.5-40.
3. Paul's Conversion and Preparation for Service. 9.1-30.
4. The Ministry of Peter. 9.31-11.18.
   a. Cures Æneas at Lydda. 9.31-35.
   b. Raises Dorcas at Joppa. 9.36-43.
   c. Cornelius and Peter, Peter's Vision and Lesson that God is No Respecter of Persons. 10.1-48.
   d. Peter Justifies his Conduct at Jerusalem. 11.1-18.
5. The Ministry of Barnabas and Paul at Antioch in Syria. 11.19-30.

IV. The Persecution of the Church at Jerusalem. 12.1-25.
1. Death of James. 12.1, 2.
2. Imprisonment of Peter and his Escape. 12.3-19.
3. Death of Herod. 12.20-23.
4. Growth of the Church. Return of Barnabas and Paul to Antioch. 12.24.25.

V. Evangelization of Asia Minor and Europe under the Leadership of Paul. 13.1-28, 31.
1. Paul and Barnabas Dedicated to Missionary Work. 13.1-3.
2. Paul's First Missionary Journey. 13.1-14.28.
   a. In Cyprus. 13.4-12.
   b. At Antioch in Pisidia. 13.13-50.
   c. At Iconium. 13.51-14.5.
   d. At Lystra and Derbe. 14.6-20.
   e. Return Journey to Antioch. 14.21-28.
3. The Council at Jerusalem and the Grant of Gentile Liberty. 15.1-35.
4. Paul's Second Missionary Journey. 15.36-18.22.
   a. Disagreement about Mark. 15.36-41.
   b. Through Derbe, Lystra, the region of Phrygia and Galatia, to Troas, and the Call to Macedonia. 16.1-10.
   c. At Philippi. 16.11-40.
   d. At Thessalonica and Bœrea. 17.1-14.
   e. At Athens. 17.15-34.
   f. At Corinth. 18.1-17.
   g. Return to Antioch in Syria. 18.18-22.
5. Paul's Third Missionary Journey. 18.23-21.16.
   a. At Ephesus. 18.23-41.
   b. In Greece. 20.1-3.
   c. The Return Journey, stopping at Troas, Miletus and Cæsarea. 20.4-21.16.
6. Paul's Last Visit to Jerusalem: Arrest and Imprisonment. 21.17-23.30.
7. Paul a Prisoner at Cæsarea. 23.31-26.32.
8. Paul's Voyage to Rome. 27.1-28.15.
9. Paul a Prisoner in Rome. 28.16-31.

As Literature. Occasionally the writing is so condensed as to be a trifle obscure. Occasionally a line of the narrative is carried forward for awhile and then dropped while Luke goes back in time to take up another line, and the transitions are not skillfully made. And, as Professor Ramsay observes, Luke expects a great deal from the reader. He does not attempt to sketch the surroundings and set the whole scene like a picture before one; he states the bare facts that seem to him important, and leaves the reader to imagine the situation.

But Luke has the true historian's skill of seizing the salient features of the history and passing quickly by events, however important in themselves, whose narration would not further the purpose of his writing. And while it is a plain, unvarnished tale which Luke gives us, it is no bare recital, for with a few vigorous strokes he draws a succession of living pictures which show us a living church. He writes with enthusiasm for his subject, and with sympathetic insight into the feelings of others.

Lessons for Today. "It would be difficult in the whole range of literature to find a work where there is less attempt at pointing a moral or drawing a lesson from the facts," thinks Professor Ramsay. "The narrator is persuaded that the

facts themselves in their barest form are a perfect lesson and a complete instruction." How well he succeeded is seen from Dr. J. H. Jowett's opinion that there is "no more buoyant, stirring, exhilarating book in the Word of God than the Acts." Certainly there is a mighty force in the Acts impelling toward Christian love, missionary zeal, and heroic living. Who can read it without an irresistible desire to have his share in making Jesus the Christ known to the uttermost part of the earth?

PAUL THE HERO OF THE ACTS

The Need of Understanding Paul the Man. Nearly three-fourths of our lessons for the entire year are about Paul and his teachings. As we follow his experiences we can not help sympathizing with his suffering, sharing his ambitions, and rejoicing in his successes. His is a powerful personality, the most influential and inspiring, after Jesus the Christ, in the whole Bible history. No teacher except Christ has ever been studied as has Paul. To understand Paul's thought one must understand Paul the man, and understanding him, one better understands Christ, for it was not Paul that lived but Christ that lived in him (Gal. 2.20).

His Early Life. Paul's story in the Acts, save for the mention of his presence at the stoning of Stephen, begins with his conversion when he was perhaps thirty years of age, but from his own words we know something of his earlier life. By birth he was "a Hebrew of Hebrews," that is, both his parents were Hebrews, and he was proud of his nationality; he was born in Tarsus, the capital of Cilicia, Asia Minor, and was proud of his birthplace. Tarsus was a famous university town under Roman dominion and Greek influences, and life there had its effects on Paul, enabling him in later years to understand and adapt himself to cultivated Greeks and practical Romans. At Tarsus Paul learned tent-making, for it was the Jewish custom for all boys, in whatever circumstances in life, to learn some manual trade. We hear of his supporting himself by working at his trade afterwards at Corinth and Ephesus.

His Education at Jerusalem. He was sent to Jerusalem for his education, and he may have lived at the home of a married sister, whose son is mentioned in Acts 23. He was there "brought up at the feet of Gamaliel," the largest-hearted and most distinguished of all the Jewish rabbis, and he became rooted and grounded in the law and the Old Testament Scriptures. "As touching the righteousness which is in the law, found blameless," he said in referring to those days when he was a strict Pharisee, when religion to him meant obedience to forms, the keeping of the Sabbath and the Jewish fasts and feasts and multitudinous laws. It has been thought that his words in Acts 26.10 in regard to the persecuted Christians at Jerusalem—When they were put to death I gave my vote against them—imply that he was a member of the Sanhedrin.

Because he was a Roman citizen by birth, was sent to Jerusalem for his education, and was able to bear the expense of an appeal to Rome, Professor Ramsay supposes that his family had means which came to him in later life.

His Conversion to Christianity. On his way to Damascus to persecute the Christians, Paul met the vision that revolutionized his life, and changed him from a violent, fanatical Jew into a self-sacrificing, devoted Christian. The fiery zeal which he had shown in seeking to destroy the false religion, as he had supposed Christianity to be, was henceforth devoted with singleness of aim to the furthering of the true faith, as he then knew it to be. His life after he became launched on his great career which lasted for fully thirty years, is told in our lessons.

An Appreciation of Paul. Whatever Paul was, he was with his whole heart. This one thing I do, To me to live is Christ, are characteristic utterances of his. His sublime devotion to Christ, his desire to become like Christ, his zeal in serving Christ, are everywhere and always manifest. He is wholly controlled by his faith, faith in God, in the unseen and spiritual, and faith in himself as a commissioned apostle to the Gentiles, called of God. He was a strong, heroic, masterful character, and yet a man of sensitive temperament and wide and tender sympathies. He possessed the power of arousing the enthusiasm and love of others, such a power as only one with strong sympathies and affections could exert. Great in his mental gifts was Paul, in his clearness of

insight into the truth, in his grasp of essentials, and great in his soundness of judgment, his delicacy of tact and courtesy, his loftiness of motive, his steadfastness of purpose, his indomitableness of will, his untiringness of zeal, his perfect fearlessness and self-poise, his sublime patience, his intense feeling and deep enthusiasm, his contagious friendliness and his complete sacrifice of self.

He was a born leader of men. His originality of thought made him a philosopher, his spiritual insight made him a theologian. New conditions and difficulties presented themselves wherever he went, but he was equal to any emergency, and whether talking to a few women by the riverside at Philippi, or to many philosophers on the Areopagus at Athens, he could do all things through him who strengthened him.

And yet this intellectual giant—organizer and administrator, orator and theologian, prophet and seer—was intensely human, and it is perhaps his humanness that has endeared him most to countless multitudes of Christians. He had great visions and inspirations, but he lived on human levels. We see him, not a saint, but a man, with human weaknesses, impulsive, unyielding at times, of quick and vehement temper, and we see this man in many ordinary situations pressed on every side, yet not straightened; perplexed, yet not unto despair; pursued, yet not forsaken; smitten down, yet not destroyed. He represents human nature at its best, the nature toward which all may strive, for he could well say to the Corinthians, Be ye imitators of me even as I also am of Christ.

What he Accomplished. When Paul began his labors, belief in Jesus Christ was confined to the small country of Palestine; when he died it had been grounded in the larger centers of population of the Eastern Mediterranean Roman World, and the followers of his Master had become a great Church destined to be the salt of the whole earth. Before him, the faith was limited to the Jewish sect; he separated Christianity from Judaism—although this was not his purpose—and made of it a world-wide religion. Said Clement, writing at Rome about the year 95, "Paul gained the noble renown which was the reward of his faith, having taught righteousness unto the whole world".

And no man has controlled the religious thought of the world ever since as has Paul through his writings. "For eighteen centuries men have been speaking in interpretation of this inspired writer," says Dr. Lyman Abbott, "and they are likely to continue speaking in interpretation of him for centuries to come. Some men grope their way to truths. Some men rise like birds upon wings and looking down upon truth from above, see it spread out beneath them in God's sunlight; such a man was Paul."

"Did Paul's life end with his own life?" questions Dean Stanley, and then he answers: "May we not rather believe that in a sense higher than Chrysostom ever dreamt of when he gave him the glorious name of the Heart of the World, the pulses of that mighty heart are still the pulses of the world's life, still beat in these later ages with even greater force than ever?"

THE PAULINE EPISTLES AND HEBREWS

Their Number. Twenty-one of the twenty-seven books of the New Testament are in the form of letters, and of them thirteen are attributed to Paul. They fill only about seventy full pages of the standard edition of the Bible, and yet one might speak hyperbolically like John and say that if everything that has been said and written in regard to these letters were written and collected, "the whole world itself would not contain the books that should be written."

Their Relation to the Acts. The Epistles both supplement and confirm the Acts. In the Acts we have the external, objective history of the primitive church; in the Epistles the subjective, internal record. The history and the letters agree in all essential points, but the letters tell about Paul's stay in Arabia, about the trouble with Peter at Antioch, about persecutions manifold, etc., not recorded in the history.

The Occasion of their Writing.

> There lies the letter, but it is not he
> As he retires unto himself and is;
> Sender and Sent-to go to make up this
> The offspring of their union,

declares Tennyson. In order to understand Paul's letters, we must understand Sent-to as well as Sender, for before him seems to have hovered the mental picture of the persons to whom he was writing, and his letter to the Philippians, for example, who were his friends, is a very different letter from that to the Romans, who were strangers to him. There are familiar references in his letters that were plain to his first readers, but not understandable now. We may imagine that in replying to a letter received from one of his churches he held that letter in his hand and followed point after point as he dictated his answer to his scribe or secretary, perhaps repeating some of its very words.

We must know the circumstances that led to the writing of each of his letters, when, where, and for what purpose it was written, and what his readers expected or needed. Seven were written to churches he himself founded, two —Colossians and Romans—to other churches, and four—First and Second Timothy, Titus and Philemon—to individuals.

They are the personal letters of a friend to friends, written in response to some question, or occasioned by some personal matter or some particular difficulty or threatening danger. They were written to strengthen faith, to rebuke sins, to instruct, to exhort. They were composed in the midst of great persecutions and dangers, while engaged in incessant missionary labors, and yet they are instinct with Paul's loving sympathy and keen interest in the welfare of his distant readers.

Their Form. The letters have certain features in common. They begin with an inscription and words of greeting. The first part of the body of the letter contains Paul's doctrinal discussions, his profound theology, and then, usually with a connecting "therefore"—for Paul's faith must lead to conduct—the letter passes to his practical instructions, his principles of conduct. The letters generally close with personal words and a benediction.

Their Themes. The letters are full of profound thoughts stamped with their writer's own individuality, tingling with his own life. They discuss the highest themes; God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, atonement, resurrection, repentance, regeneration, faith, judgment. "That Paul gave form to the teaching of Christ is evident," said Dr. Alexander McKenzie; "but they are mistaken who think he altered the teaching itself. He expanded the central teaching of Christ, that he had come to seek and to save that which was lost; and he defined the loss, and the seeking and the saving. He taught in what way and for what reasons the Good Shepherd gave his life for the sheep. He declared the resurrection of the dead in words which remain the clearest exposition of Immortality. He exalted love and enforced it in the finest sentences ever written concerning it. He guided the churches in their affairs and in the behavior of their members. He had learned the mind of Christ. This was his claim for himself."

Their Literary Style. Paul's literary style is many-sided like Paul himself. At one time he is logical, at another mystical, and again intensely practical. His language is now terse, now rough and abrupt, now gentle and tender, but always forcible. As Luther says, "His words are not dead words, they are living creatures, and have hands and feet." At times his language is singularly beautiful, as in our lesson from First Corinthians. To use the figure of a German writer, his tender, loving phrases are scattered like sweet-smelling flowers over the rugged, stony slopes of his letters.

His writings abound in bold antitheses and sudden turnings, digressions and corrections. Some of his sentences are broken or so involved that one must agree with Peter that in his epistles are "some things hard to be understood"; the reason for his involved sentences may be seen in the fact that he did not write and revise, but he dictated his words, speaking as he thought. In his calmer moods his words flowed smoothly, but when passionately in earnest—this man who believed and therefore spoke—his words poured forth in a torrent, and he felt the inadequacy of language to express his thought. Then, too, he thought over a truth in all its aspects, and expressed his thoughts as they came to him. When the letter was finished he seems to have sometimes added a postscript himself—as when, troubled with weak eyes, he wrote to the Galatians, "See with how large letters I write unto you with mine own hand"—but there was always urgent work to be done in his present field of labor, and he had no time to read and correct his scribe's work.

Their Inspiration. "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us," are the

confident words of the apostles in the first Christian letter. "The love of Christ constraineth us," are words of Paul to the Corinthians that apply to his writings.

"All his glowing language issued forth
With God's deep stamp upon its current worth."

While many themes that occupied Paul's attention have now lost their force—such as the question whether a Christian should eat meat that had been offered to idols—yet the general principles of religious conduct by which he settled troublesome questions are as helpful now as when they were first written, as applicable to us as to the ones to whom they were addressed. Though written in special emergencies for a special people, with all the anxious thought and care of a pastor, these letters have their messages for all ages and all peoples. They contain truths for all time. The proof of their inspiration is that they have inspired Christian faith throughout more than eighteen hundred years.

Their Chronological Order. The order in which Paul's letters are printed in the New Testament is not the order in which they were written. The longest letters are given first, and perhaps at the time the arrangement was made the supposed order of importance of the churches and individuals to whom the letters were written had an influence on their order of presentation. The right way in which to read and study them is the historical order.

Their probable order and place in the history of Acts may be thus indicated:—

After Acts 18.5, First Thessalonians.
After Acts 18.11, Second Thessalonians.
After Acts 19.10, First Corinthians.
After Acts 20.1, Second Corinthians.
After Acts 20.2, Galatians.
After Acts 20.3, Romans.
After Acts 28.30, Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon, Philippians.
After Paul's Release, First Timothy and Titus.
During Paul's Second Imprisonment, Second Timothy.

They are conveniently arranged in four groups: first, The Earliest Letters—First and Second Thessalonians; second, the Controversial Letters—First and Second Corinthians, Galatians and Romans; third, the Prison Letters—Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon; fourth, the Pastoral Letters—First and Second Timothy and Titus.

The Letters from which we have No Lessons. These may be thus briefly characterized: Second Thessalonians was written to correct a misunderstanding that arose from Paul's words in his First Epistle to the Thessalonians regarding the second coming of Christ; Colossians discusses the pre-eminence of Christ, his mediatorial work; Philemon is a beautiful little personal letter about a runaway slave; Ephesians is one of Paul's most profound letters and deals with "the church of the Lord"; First and Second Timothy and Titus contain directions in regard to the care of churches.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE THESSALONIANS

To Whom Written. With a letter it makes all the difference in the world to whom it is written. As Dan Crawford expresses it, we need, in reading the Epistles, to keep ever before us "the envelope address"—To the Thessalonians, To the Corinthians, etc.

Philippi was the starting-point of Paul's missionary tour in Europe. After having been shamefully treated there (1 Thess. 2.2), Paul went on to Thessalonica. The account of his mission in Thessalonica is given in Acts 17. Many Jews, devout Greeks and chief women believed his message, but jealous Jews stirred up the rabble, seized Jason and others and dragged them before the rulers of the city, crying, "These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also." The opposition forced Paul to leave. From 1 Thess. 1.9, we know that the flourishing church which Paul founded at Thessalonica was chiefly among the Gentiles, and his stay there must have been much longer than it would appear from the account in the Acts. It was to this church that Paul wrote two letters which we call the Epistles to the Thessalonians.

The Occasion and Date of the Letter. From Thessalonica and Berœa Paul

went to Athens. There he learned that the church at Thessalonica was suffering persecution and he longed to visit them, but being prevented from so doing—"hindered by Satan", he says—he sent Timothy to them in his stead.

Timothy returned to Paul at Corinth (which succeeded Athens in Paul's itinerary) with an encouraging report of the faith and loyalty of the Thessalonians. He also brought word that false views about Christ's second coming had spread among them, many of them having given up their work to idly await his return, and that others were anxious about the state of their dead. To correct this error and comfort the mourners, as well as to exhort them all to right living, and to assure them of his continued interest in their welfare, Paul wrote his first letter to the Thessalonians.

The two Epistles to the Thessalonians are the earliest of Paul's writings, and, unless the letter of James is an exception, they are the earliest writings in the New Testament. The exact date depends on the system of chronology followed. It may have been 53 A. D.

Its Character and Contents. This is a missionary's letter to a newly-founded church. It is throughout intimate and personal in character. It contains but one doctrinal passage, 4.13-5.11.

The dominant thought concerning Christ is his "Second Coming" (the "Parousia"), the expectation that he would soon return to the world in great glory and power. "The Thessalonians had received all their teaching about Christianity from Paul and his fellow missionaries, but they had not observed true proportions in their acceptance of it. They had seized on the idea of the second coming of Christ with avidity, and allowed it to work on their imagination so as to color and rule everything else. Paul, too, participated in the belief, though he kept it in its place. At this period he seems to have expected a visible return of Jesus Christ during his own lifetime. Later he came to anticipate death for himself followed by union with Christ in the realm of the blessed (2 Cor. 5.1-5; Phil. 1.21-25)." His teaching in this letter is that the best way to prepare for Christ's coming is to live a life of love and service now.

For the rest, the Epistle expresses earnest, affectionate interest in the inexperienced converts; commends their hospitality, Christian activity and brave endurance of trials to which they were subjected by their enemies; and exhorts them to live in a manner worthy of their faith, following after that which is good.

The Outline.

I. Introduction. 1.1-10.
  1. Salutation. 1.1.
  2. Thanksgiving. 1.2-10.
II. Reminiscences of his Ministry among them. 2.1-12.
III. Thanksgiving for their Fidelity under Persecution. 2.13-16.
IV. The Sending of Timothy and his Report. 2.17-3.13.
V. Exhortations and Instructions. 4.1-5.28.
  1. To Purity. 4.1-8.
  2. To Brotherly Love. 4.9-12.
  3. Comfort concerning their Christian Dead. 4.13-18.
  4. The Sudden Coming of Christ and how to be Ready. 5.1-11.
  5. Various Exhortations. 5.12-22.
VI. Conclusion. 5.23-28.
  1. Prayer. 5.23, 24.
  2. Final Directions. 5.25-27.
  3. Benediction. 5.28.

As Literature. The language, like the thought, is simple and clear.

Lessons for Today. Though the condition of life has greatly changed in the centuries since this letter was written, human nature has not changed, and the words of instruction and encouragement still bear their message to Christian converts.

The beautiful words concerning the dead, 4.13 and 14; the injunction about the breastplate of faith and love and the helmet of the hope of salvation, 5.8; and the practical exhortations of 5.15-22, should be committed to memory.

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THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE GALATIANS

To Whom Written. Galatia was the name of the great Roman province which extended from north to south across the central plateau of Asia Minor, and was named from the Gauls who had come to the northern part of this province from the Rhine region in the third century B. C. In writing about his churches, Paul often groups them, speaking of them as the churches of Asia, of Galatia, of Macedonia, of Achaia. His letter to the Galatians was written to the churches which on his First Missionary Journey he founded in the southern part of the Roman Province of Galatia—at Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe—as recorded in the thirteenth and fourteenth chapters of Acts.

This is the "South Galatian View", of which Dr. Ramsay is the able exponent. Antioch and Iconium were in the district of Phrygia ("Phrygian Galatia") and Lystra and Derbe in the district of Lycaonia ("Lycaonian Galatia"), and some scholars hold to the older, or North Galatian View, that this epistle must have been written to cities in the *district of Galatia* (in the northern part of the province of Galatia)—Ancyra, Tavium, and Pessinus. They claim that Acts 16.6 and 19.1 refer to visits made by Paul to these cities.

The Occasion for the Letter and its Date. In the churches of Galatia there were Jews who with their faith in Christ did not forget their Jewish laws, and Gentiles who knew and cared little about the Jewish traditions. Paul had come to these people and had been received as an apostle with power. After he left, Jewish Christians came from Jerusalem and declared that Paul was not an apostle, that he was not accredited by the church at Jerusalem, and that he was setting aside the laws of Moses. The Galatians listened to these perverters of the gospel of Christ; they questioned whether Paul had not spoken without authority, were "quickly removed from him that called them in the grace of Christ unto a different gospel" (1.6); wavered in their minds as to whether the rite of circumcision should be reinstated, and began the Jewish observance of the Seventh Day. Paul was anxiously watching over all his churches, and when the discouraging news of the backsliding of the Galatians was brought to him, he felt that it threatened the very life of the church, and feared that he had bestowed his labor upon them in vain (4.11). To remonstrate with them and to defend his authority and his teachings (especially of his doctrine of salvation by faith), Paul wrote the Epistle to the Galatians. It is a protest for all time against fickleness.

The epistle was probably written from Macedonia in A. D. 53.

Its Character and Contents. In brief, Galatians is a treatment of the relationship of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the Mosaic law. It is largely a defence of Paul's apostolic standing (in which he reviews his life from his conversion to the close of the council at Jerusalem), and an endeavor to keep the gospel free from the rites and ceremonies of the Mosaic system, which were by no means essential to salvation. "Paul exposes the folly of those who had left the green pastures of Christian truth for the dried husks of legalism. He exhorts them to seek salvation, not by dead works, but through living union with him who gave his life a ransom for many." He showed them how the law of Moses had served its day. It had been as a tutor to bring men to Christ, but now that the full light had come it was worse than folly to walk in the dim twilight of the Hebrew dispensation. He warned them against taking the religion of Christ too lightly. Christian liberty did not mean that one could do as he pleased. As many as had professed Christ had put on Christ. The fruit of the Christian Spirit was not self-indulgence, but self-sacrifice.

The Outline.

I. Introduction. 1.1-10.
   1. Salutation. 1.1-5.
   2. Apostasy of Galatians. 1.6-10.

II. Defence of his Apostleship. 1.11-2.21.
   1. His Knowledge of Christ and his Gospel Revealed to him, not Gained from Other Apostles. 1.11-24.
   2. His Preaching of the Gospel not Controlled by Other Apostles, but Endorsed by "The Three". 2.1-10.
   3. His Teaching Maintained against Peter. 2.11-21.

III. Legalism Condemned. 3.1-4.31.
  1. The Folly of Going back from the Gospel to the Law. 3.1-14.
  2. The Law Preparatory to the Gospel. 3.15-4.7.
  3. Pleading for Loyalty. 4.8-20.
  4. A Story with an Application. 4.21-31.

IV. Christian Liberty Asserted. 5.1-26.
  1. Hold fast your Freedom. 5.1-12.
  2. Abuse of Liberty Censured. 5:13-26.

V. Exhortation to Forbearance and Helpfulness. 6.1-10.

VI. Conclusion. 6.11-18.
  1. Postscript in his own Hand: the Main Matter Restated. 6.11-17.
  2. Benediction. 6.18.

As Literature. Professor Ramsay calls this one of the most remarkable letters that was ever written, and declares that "it seems to have poured forth from Paul's mind in one effort, like a flood of lava from a volcano." "No wonder," exclaims Professor Deissmann, "that this letter with its lightnings and thunderbolts especially fascinated Luther, the great German reformer!" It is indeed a fiery letter, and yet the apostle's indignation now and then melts into tenderness, and his words thrill with the pain of a grieved heart, as in 4.19 and 20, when he addresses the Galatians as "My little children" and adds: "I could wish to be present with you now, and to change my tone; for I am perplexed about you."

Especially noticeable are the many declamatory passages.

Lessons for Today. The great lessons of the Epistle as a whole is that "Nothing external to man is of the essence of religion", and that Christianity does not depend upon the observance of any particular rite or ceremony, but is a live faith, a faith whose fruitage is service, whose reward is salvation, the free gift of Jesus Christ.

It is of permanent value as the manifesto of Christian liberty. In the words of Dr. Godet: "Just what the Act of Emancipation was to the slaves in the English colonies, was the Epistle to the Galatians in the primitive church. It marked a new stage in its development. It was by studying and appropriating this Epistle that Luther was enabled to strike off the fetters weighing down the spiritual and moral life of one section of the Christian world. In this Epistle he found the secret of his own deliverance; hence he declares himself 'wedded' to this letter, and called it his 'Catherine Bora'. Taking this as his weapon, he plunged into the fearful conflict with the papistry and religious materialism of his time. This was the pebble from the brook, with which, like another David, he went forth to meet the papal giant, and smote him in the forehead."

Professor S. G. Findlay voices another of its permanent values. "Of the four major epistles, this one is superlatively characteristic of its author. It is *Paulinissima Paulinarum*—most Pauline of Pauline things. It is largely autobiographical; hence its peculiar value. Reading it, we watch history in the making. We trace the rise of the new religion in the typical man of the epoch. The master-builder of the apostolic church stands before us, at the crisis of his work. He lets us look into his heart, and learn the secret of his power. We come to know the Apostle Paul as we know scarcely any other of the world's great minds. We find in him a man of the highest intellectual and spiritual powers, equally great in passion and in action, as a thinker and a leader of men. But at every step of our acquaintance the apostle points us beyond himself; he says, 'It is not I; it is Christ that lives in me.' If this Epistle teaches us the greatness of Paul, it teaches us all the more the divine greatness of Jesus Christ, before whom that kingly intellect and passionate heart bowed in absolute devotion."

Verses to remember: 2.20; 3.24-26; 4.4-7; 5.1,14, 22, 23, 25; 6.1-10, 14.

THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE CORINTHIANS

To Whom Written. During his Second Missionary Journey, Paul spent eighteen months in Corinth, the wealthy capital of the Roman province of Achaia, or Greece. Corinth was then a great maritime city, the meeting place of East and West, and in its luxury and vice it has been described as "the Vanity Fair of the Roman Empire." The account of Paul's labors there is given in

Acts 18.1-18. He lived with Aquila and Priscilla and with them wrought at his trade of tentmaker. He preached for a time to the Jews, but their opposition grew till he turned to the Gentiles, and among the latter established a flourishing church. Finally the wrath of the Jews culminated in an effort to convict him before Gallio, the proconsul, of teaching men to worship God contrary to the law. Gallio refused to be a judge in questions concerning their own law, but the trouble led to Paul's departure.

It was to this Church at Corinth that Paul wrote the Letters which we call First and Second Corinthians. While written primarily "To the Church of God which is at Corinth," First Corinthians was also intended for "all that call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place", 1 Cor. 1.2.

The Occasion for the Letter and its Date. Paul's interest in the church at Corinth remained keen, and five years later when he was at Ephesus, but forty-five miles away, he doubtless had frequent news concerning them. It is believed that information he received led him to write a first letter which has been lost (1 Cor. 5.9). Possibly he visited Corinth again before writing the Epistle which we call First Corinthians (for several passages in Second Corinthians speak of two earlier visits) and that visit was a sorrowful one owing to the state of affairs there; see 2 Cor. 2.1 where he says, "I determined that I would not come again to you with sorrow." After sending Timothy and Erastus to the Corinthians (Acts 19.22; 1 Cor. 4.17), Paul received a letter from the household of Chloe and from the Corinthians themselves containing such disturbing news, that he at once wrote in reply his First Epistle to the Corinthians, in order to combat the false reports which were being circulated about himself and his authority, and to correct certain evil practices in the Church.

Factions had arisen at Corinth: one party said, "I am of Paul"; another, "I am of Apollos"; another, "I am of Cephas"; another, "I am of Christ". Those who ranged themselves under Paul's name were seemingly the Gentile converts, and they claimed too great liberty, regarding things sinful as indifferent, treating with disrespect the scruples of others, and causing great scandal by partaking of sacrificial meats. Those "of Apollos" were attracted by the latter's eloquence, and were doubtless those who were inclined to think meanly of Paul's preaching. Those "of Cephas," or Peter, were doubtless the Judaizers, determined opponents of Paul, who had come to Corinth with letters of recommendation and professed to be ministers of Christ, but were false prophets: they called in question Paul's apostleship, probably on the ground that he was not one of the original Twelve. Those "of Christ" showed little Christian spirit in claiming superiority over others.

Paul's letter in which he exhorts the Corinthians to Christian unity, rebukes their immoralities, and answers their various questions, was written from Ephesus during his Third Missionary Journey, probably in the year 57 A. D. It was sent in Paul's name and that of Sosthenes, the latter perhaps the scribe to whom he dictated it.

Its Character and Contents. This letter gives us the best picture we have of the institutions and the opinions of the earliest Christian Churches. In it Paul is the shepherd of souls. His regard for his flock has been compared to that of a father for a promising son beset with temptations, whose character combined great excellencies with great defects. The letter shows Paul's penetrating insight, profound reflections, and practical wisdom, his liberality in all matters of indifference, and his strictness in all matters of right and wrong.

Paul's great theme in the letter is the professing Christian's need of practical godliness. The keynote may be taken as that of 3.16: "Ye are the temple of God"—therefore you must live lives of sanctity and service.

The topics which the letter discusses are separated one from another in the American Revised Version by extra spacing.

The Outline.

I. Introduction: Salutation and Thanksgiving. 1.1-9.
II. Concerning Reports of Evil in the Church. 1.10-6.20.
  1. Factions. 1.10-4.21.
    a. Contentions Contrary to the Spirit of the Gospel. 1.10-3.3.
    b. Contentions Contrary to the Spirit of Paul and Apollos. 3.4-4.12.
    c. Paul's Reproof a Token of his Love. 4.14-21.

2. Immoralities. 5.1-6.20.
   a. Their Moral Judgment Warped. 5.1-13.
   b. Their Litigations Deplored. 6.1-8.
   c. "Glorify God in Your Body." 6.9-20.

III. Concerning Certain Specific Questions Addressed to Paul by the Church. 7.1-14.40.
1. Marriage. 7.1-40.
2. Meats Sacrificed to Idols. 8.1-11.1.
3. Public Worship. 11.2-34.
   a. Conduct of Women. 11.2-16.
   b. Lord's Supper. 11.17-34.
4. Varieties of Spiritual Gifts. 12-14.
   a. Gifts Diverse, but the Spirit the Same. 12.
   b. Love the Greatest of Gifts. 13.
   c. Prophesying is Better than Speaking with Tongues. 14.

IV. Concerning Immortality and the Resurrection. 15.

V. Conclusion. 16.
1. Collection for Jerusalem. 16.1-4.
2. Personal Matters. 16.5-20.
3. Salutations and Benediction. 16.21-24.

As Literature. As a whole First Corinthians is a systematic, statesmanlike document, rarely subjective, having few outbursts of feeling, and to it Professor Ramsay's observations about Paul's style aptly apply: "Paul never sought after literary style. In him the thought makes the style. He never aimed at rhetorical effect after the rules taught in the schools of rhetoric. He wrote as the subject moved him, freely, simply, and naturally."

Exceptions are the two great chapters of the letter, the thirteenth, the Hymn of Love, and the fifteenth, the classic on the doctrine of the resurrction which seems spoken as by the tongues of angels, not of men.

For moral elevation and sublimity of expression, the thirteenth of First Corinthians is without a peer in the world's literature. It has measured, stately rhythm and poetic form. "Not the rhythm of the rhetorical school— a natural rhythm, perfectly spontaneous and untaught. We notice that when Paul's religious emotion rises to the highest pitch, it has a certain note of enthusiasm—in the literal sense of the Greek word, possession by the Divine power—which tends to impart to the verbal expression a rhythmic flow." When we attempt to explain its beauty, we ascribe it to the exquisite choice of words, the combined strength and simplicity of style, the effective use of antithesis and repetition, "the style becoming increasingly impetuous, the words appearing to tumble over each other."

This pæan of love bursts upon the reader as a surprise, coming as it does between the tumultuous arguments of the twelfth and fourteenth chapters. In chapter twelve Paul argues that there are diverse gifts, but the Spirit is the same; in chapter fourteen that the gift of prophecy is better than that of tongues; in the midst of this background of controversy and discussion he suddenly stops and counsels his readers to desire earnestly the greater gifts: he will show them a most excellent way, the way of love, of chapter 13. "It is as if, in a mighty battle, there should be a cessation of arms," says Henry Ward Beecher, "and there should be lifted up, and roll over the battle-field, a wondrous hymn, united in by all the bands; and as if no sooner were the notes of this magnificent music completed than the battle should begin again, and the bands, separating, should go their several ways, to cheer their several squadrons." And another has beautifully said: "We can imagine how the apostle's amanuensis must have paused to look up into his master's face at the sudden change of his style of dictation, and seen his countenance lighted up as it had been the face of an angel, as the sublime vision of Divine perfection passed before him."

The words of lofty dignity and beauty of verses 12-28, 35-57 of the fifteenth chapter have been read or chanted by Christians over their dead for eighteen centuries. It has become consecrated to that purpose.

Lessons for Today. The same questions in regard to church discipline, social relations, and sacraments no longer vex the churches. On several topics Paul

is careful to state that he himself is speaking, "not the Lord," or that he speaks after his own judgment. Aside from the lessons of the two great chapters, its value for today I give in the words of Dr. A. T. Robertson:—

"Paul had to meet the live issues of a mission church in a great and wicked city. These issues vary greatly in value. They range from petty prejudices about preachers to the great doctrine of the resurrection, from serious moral lapses to the eating of meats offered to idols, from the problem of marriage to the collection for the poor, from going to law before the heathen to misuse of the spiritual gifts. But the remarkable thing about it all is that in the treatment of casuistical questions Paul does not use mere dialectical skill. He seeks the Christian principle that will guide one aright. In doing this he marked the way for Christians in all similar matters. Some, indeed most, of these problems in casuistry have long since passed away, but others have arisen like them. Hence First Corinthians is the most modern of all Paul's writings. Some of the same problems survive with us in a somewhat altered form. But in any case Paul's Christian insight helps every honest-hearted man today who longs to walk in the footsteps of Jesus."

The passages which all Christians should know are many. First and foremost, are chapter thirteen and chapter fifteen, verses 12-22, 35-58. Then Paul's words about the true foundation, 3.11; about the temple of God, 3.16; about self-restraint for the sake of others, 8.13; about life a race, 9.24, 25; about temptations, 10.12,13; about expediency, 10.23, 24; about being strong, 16.13, 14.

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE CORINTHIANS

To Whom Written. This letter is formally addressed not only "To the church of God which is at Corinth", but also to "all the saints that are in the whole of Achaia". See the preceding letter.

The Occasion for the Letter and Its Date. After writing his First Letter to the Corinthians Paul sent Titus (possibly with the letter) to learn how its words of counsel and warning were received. Later Paul left Ephesus for Troas, but not finding Titus there, went into Macedonia to meet him. There Titus brought him word that his letter had been well received by the majority of Christians at Corinth, who sent him messages of warmest affection. Paul's mind was greatly relieved by this news, but he was filled with indignation on being told that a minority of Jews refused to submit to his authority and were actively engaged in undermining his work. Thereupon he wrote this Second Epistle, which is directed now to the faithful church in words of tenderness and love, and now to his false detractors, the corruptors of the church, in words of deepest severity.

Because the severe reproof of the last four chapters follows somewhat strangely the kindly wording of the first nine chapters, some scholars think that they are a part of another letter which once Paul regretted having written (2 Cor. 7.8), but their bitterly controversial tone is readily attributed to the circumstances that called them forth.

The Second Letter was written from Macedonia, during Paul's Third Missionary Journey, about the year 57 A. D.

Its Character and Contents. It is a letter of personal experiences, narrating Paul's trials and joys. Chapters 11 and 12 are of special value for the history they contain of his life. Dr. Lyman Abbott suggests that while the other letters might be compared to sermons and addresses, this can only be compared to a prayer-meeting talk. It is an impassioned outpouring of Paul's heart and reveals "the varied emotions that succeeded and encountered one another in his impulsive soul—deep contrition and thankfulness toward God, the reformer's wrath, irony and trenchant candor towards the vicious."

The letter has no special topic. Three chief thoughts seem to have filled Paul's mind as he wrote: gratitude for the good reception of his letter, indignation at the insinuations of his opponents, and desire of hastening the collection of money for the relief of the poor in Judea.

The Outline.

I. Introduction: Salutation and Thanksgiving. 1.1-11.

II. Paul's Relations with the Corinthians. 1.12-3.4.
  1. His Sincerity. 1.12-14.
  2. His Postponed Visit. 1.15-2.4.
  3. Forgiveness of the Offender. 2.5-11.
  4. His Reason for Going to Macedonia. 2.12, 13.
  5. His Success; the Corinthians his Commendation. 2.14-3.4.
III. Paul's Defence of his Ministry. 3.4-7.16.
  1. The Old Ministry and the New. 3.4-4.6.
  2. Human Weakness and Divine Strength. 4.7-6.10.
  3. His Appeal to the Corinthians. 6.11-7.16.
IV. The Grace of Giving. 8.1-9.15.
  1. Example of Macedonian Churches. 8.1-7.
  2. Completion of Collection at Corinth Urged. 8.8-9.5.
  3. The True Spirit of Giving. 9.6-15.
V. Paul's Apostolic Justification. 10.1-12.10.
  1. His Assertion of Authority. 10-1.18.
  2. His Fear for their Loyalty. 11:1-15.
  3. His Labors and Sufferings. 11.16-33.
  4. His Visions. 12.1-10.
VI. Conclusion. 12.11-13.14.
  1. Warnings. 12.11-13.10.
  2. Farewell and Benediction. 13.11-14.

As Literature. Second Corinthians is the most personal of the longer letters, and also the least methodical. It is not calm like First Corinthians. Erasmus compares it to a river which sometimes flows in a gentle stream, sometimes rushes down as a torrent bearing all before it; sometimes spreads out like a placid lake; sometimes loses itself, as it were, in the sand, and breaks out in its fulness in some unexpected place. The gentle, placid places of the stream differ no more from the torrential, sudden outbursts, than do Paul's gentle words to the obedient, penitent church and his stern, almost menacing words in regard to those who were impugning his motives, and scattering seeds of calumny in regard to his ministry.

Lessons for Today. The Epistle abounds in allusions which we can not wholly understand, and it is, therefore, the least read of Paul's letters by the majority of Christians.

While it is the least theological of all the longer letters, yet in speaking of his own personal experiences Paul deduces many truths which are developed in the later written letters. Dr. Abbott compares it to the overture of "Parsifal" which contains the *motifs* that are afterward worked out in the opera: it contains the motifs of his subsequent writing, the seeds of everything wrought out more fully in the Epistles to the Galatians, the Romans, the Philippians, the Ephesians, and the Colossians. And yet they are simply seeds. They can hardly be called thoughts.

Verses which every one should know by heart are 1.4; 3.18; 4.6; 4.17-5.1; 5.9, 10, 17-19; 8.9; 9.6-8, 13; 10.17, 18.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE ROMANS

To Whom Written. The address upon this letter is "To all that are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints," 1.7. The origin of the church at Rome is unknown; it may have been founded by the "sojourners from Rome" who were among those who believed at Pentecost. From 1.5; 11.13; 15.15, 16, we infer that it consisted largely of Gentiles.

Although Paul had neither founded nor visited this church at Rome, he had heard much about them and he knew many individuals there. Some of them he mentions in the sixteenth chapter, beginning with Priscilla and Aquila, already known to us through their work with Paul at Corinth and Ephesus, and ending with "all the saints". (Many scholars believe that these greetings in the sixteenth chapter, a little letter within the letter, with their allusions to common work and sufferings, were written by Paul to the Christians at Ephesus, and through a later copyist's error became incorporated in the letter to the Romans.)

The Occasion for the Letter and its Date. Rome was the capital of the Roman Empire. From Rome the gospel might radiate to all the world, and

Paul's heart had claimed the whole world for Christ. "I must see Rome," he had said. His plan of campaign included Spain, and, no doubt, northwestern Africa and even Britain. Rome was the key to this work in the western half of the Empire. With his face turned toward the West, Paul wrote his Letter to the Christians at Rome, whom he had longed "these many years" to see, in order to win their confidence in advance and thus prepare the way for his coming. Paul was the Apostle to the Gentiles, 15.15, 16, and his heart yearned to win some of them at Rome for Christ, even as he had other Gentiles, 1.13.

Paul wrote his letter, in all probability, from Corinth toward the close of his Third Missionary Journey, shortly before he started on what proved to be his last Journey to Jerusalem, with contributions from the Greek Churches to the poor there, in 57 A. D. The scribe to whom he dictated the letter was Tertius, 16.22; the messenger by whom it was sent to Rome was Phœbe, 16.1, 2, a deaconess of Cenchreæ. We may think of Paul as sitting at Corinth in an upper room of the home of Aquila and Priscilla, or of Titus Justus, and dictating his words to Tertius, who wrote them down with a reed pen on sheets of papyrus.

The Appearance of the Letter. This is the longest of Paul's letters. Professor Deissmann describes a "gigantic letter" of 186 A. D., a papyrus discovered at Oxyrhynchus, which is somewhat shorter than Romans and yet is between two and three yards long. This gives a good idea of the outward appearance of Paul's long letters—great rolls made of single-column sheets pasted together.

Its Character and Contents. "Can any of you give the subjects and the progress of doctrine in Paul's Epistle to the Romans?" asked a visitor in a theological seminary in India. Much to his surprise, a boy arose and gave a remarkably complete synopsis of Paul's argument. The visitor was still more surprised when he learned that this boy came from the lowest of all castes there, and had lived with his parents in the densest ignorance and most degrading superstition until they died of starvation, when with two brothers he had been taken by missionaries into their school.

In Romans Paul was not considering questions called up by a letter from the church or by conditions in the church, as in his other letters; he was carrying out independent trains of thought in which he was supremely interested. It is his greatest theological writing. It is "the gospel according to Paul." "In this Epistle a heroic spirit, a universal outlook, a note of triumph over controversy and misrepresentation, an imperialistic instinct, and a profound insight into human nature, have united to inspire its intense passion and its unique power."

Romans is an exhaustive treatment of God's way of salvation. It gives a logical development of the gospel announced by Christ; its harmony with the revelation given in the Old Testament; its application to life. The keynote is 1.16 and 17: the gospel, the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth: to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is revealed a righteousness of God from faith unto faith: as it is written, But the righteous shall live by faith.

Paul's object was not to give a complete system of Christian doctrine, but to give a full treatment of the doctrine of salvation through Christ. The central thought in regard to salvation is that men are not saved by their good deeds, but they are saved through the atonement of Christ. Salvation is not "of works," is not merited by man's goodness, is not attained by works of obedience to the law: salvation is "of grace", it is God's free gift and is appropriated by man through faith in Christ the Redeemer. The doctrine of "salvation by works" meant that every good deed had a certain saving value, that religion consisted of prayers and offerings of sacrifices and giving of alms—of such obedience, in fact, to the Mosaic law as the Pharisees of Christ's time had held to be essential, although coupled with this external and legalistic religion was a belief in Jesus as the Messiah. The Jews saw no inconsistency in thus trying to serve two masters. The mission of Paul's letter was to show that one could not hold the two ways of salvation, that one could not be both a Jew of the old dispensation and a Christian of the new, that the Mosaic law had served its purpose in preparing the way for the gospel of Christ.

The practical part of the letter, chapters 12-15, treats of the cultivation of various Christian virtues, civil duties, the right of private judgment, and the doctrine of Christian expediency in its relation to weak faith.

The Outline.

I. Introduction: Salutation and Personal Explanations. 1.1-15.
II. The Doctrinal Part. 1.16-11.36.
  1. The Gospel of God for the World. 1.16-8.39.
    a. The Subject Stated. 1.16, 17.
    b. Universal Sinfulness. 1.18-3.20.
    c. The Message of Salvation. 3.21-31.
    d. Its Proof. 4.1-5.21.
    e. Its Results. 6.1-8.39.
  2. The Jews' Rejection of Salvation. 9.1-11.36.
    a. Paul's Sorrow. 9.1-5.
    b. The Original Word to Israel. 9.6-29.
    c. Their Own Responsibility for their Rejection. 9.30-10.21.
    d. The Rejection Partial and Temporary. 11.1-36.
III. The Practical Part. 12.1-15.13.
  1. Self-dedication, Humility, Mutual Love. 12.1-21.
  2. Obedience to Authority. 13.1-7.
  3. Love the Fulfilment of the Law. 13.8-10.
  4. Salvation at Hand. 13.11-14.
  5. Respect for Convictions of Others. 14.1-15.13.
IV. Conclusion. 15.14-16.27.
  1. Personal Matters. 15.14-33.
  2. Phœbe. 16.1, 2.
  3. Greetings and Warning. 16.3-23.
  4. Doxology. 16.25-27.

As Literature. Romans is the most abstract of all Paul's letters, being more of a treatise than a letter. At a very early date it was published in two forms: the one as it appears in our Bibles today, and the other with all the personal references omitted as a treatise for all churches.

Coleridge calls this "the profoundest book in existence"; Godet, "the cathedral of Christian faith". "Its logic and its feeling are inseparable. It answers the highest test of eloquence in stimulating emotion with profound thought, and in fusing thought in feeling." It was written with great deliberation and care; its profound thoughts are systematically elaborated; its language shows great literary skill. It is the most finished of all Paul's letters. Dr. Findlay well suggests that fronting the imperial city Paul rises to a higher stature and assumes a loftier accent than hitherto. The added stateliness of diction and amplitude of treatment betray an imagination and a statesmanlike sense, touched by the majesty of Rome.

At times Paul's thoughts seem to throng upon him faster than he can dictate. The first sentence is seven verses long. Parenthetical thoughts are often pursued to such length that one is in danger of forgetting the main line of reasoning which they interrupt. Antitheses and dramatic elements abound.

Chapter eight with its great theme, the nature and the joys and the high requirements of the Christian life, is one of the most eloquent and beautiful as well as helpful in the whole Bible. "We always think of it", says the author of "The Mind of Christ in St. Paul", "as St. Paul's finest composition, and perhaps the most precious legacy which he bequeathed to the Church. It is a noble piece of literary work, full of choice language and deep philosophic thought, and as a picture of the Christian life and its possessions and hopes, it reaches a sublime elevation which is nowhere else attained except in the lofty sayings of Jesus".

Lessons for Today. So true of today are the sins which the letter denounces, that the Chinese helper to whom a missionary was dictating a translation stopped his work, exclaiming with great feeling, "This is a picture of the Chinese people, and I will not have the story sent out to the world". After Dr. Ashmore had translated it into the Chinese language the people said to him: "You wrote this since you came. In this book you wrote against us."

When Robert Bruce, the old Scottish minister, lay dying he suddenly exclaimed to his daughter: "Hold, daughter, my Master calls me", and bade her bring the Bible. "Cast me up the eighth chapter of Romans," he said, "and place my finger on these words: 'I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,

nor height nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord'". And thus he died, with his finger there, and his heart there too.

There is a striking resemblance between Paul's counsels and precepts and those of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount. Paul never sat at the feet of Jesus, but he knew the mind of Jesus Christ. "Romans is such a treasury of spiritual riches, and, as it were, such an overflowing cornucopia, that if we read it a thousand times over there is always something to be found new in it, so that the last time of reading it will be the most profitable." Luther was right in his words just quoted; it is difficult to select the most helpful verses for memorizing. Among them are certainly the following: 1.16; 2.6, 7, 11; 3.23; 5.1-8; 6.8-11, 23; 8.1, 2, 14-17, 28, 31, 32, 35, 37-39; 10.9, 10, 12-15; 11.33-36; 12.1-21; 13.1, 7, 8, 10-14; 14.21; 15.1-6.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE PHILIPPIANS

To Whom Written. In the course of his Second Missionary Journey, in response to the appeal of "the man from Macedonia", Paul, accompanied by Silas and Timothy and Luke, crossed over into Europe, landed at Neapolis and went thence over the mountains to Philippi. The account of the founding there of the church is given in the sixteenth chapter of Acts, which tells of Paul's quiet teaching of Lydia and her companions by the riverside, of his conflict with superstition in the streets of the city, of his consequent beating and imprisonment, of his winning the jailor for Christ, and of his dignified behavior before the magistrates. Philippi is of interest to us, not because it was the capital of Macedonia, a Roman colony, and an important commercial center, nor because it was the scene of the decisive battle between Octavius and Antony on the one side and Brutus and Cassius on the other, but because it was the first city in Europe in which a Christian church was established, and because to it Paul sent his beautiful letter.

The Occasion for the Letter and its Date. To Paul while a prisoner in Rome awaiting trial before Cæsar the Philippians sent a "missionary box"—money and gifts—as an expression of their affection for him and to provide for his needs. In grateful acknowledgment of their thoughtful kindness and love, this letter was written. Epaphroditus, who brought the money, became dangerously ill in Rome, and on his recovery he was eager to return home and relieve the fears of the Philippians concerning him. Paul therefore sent him back with this letter.

Philippians is one of the four letters grouped together as "Letters of the Imprisonment", Ephesians, Colossians and Philemon being the other three. That Philippians was written from his prison in Rome is shown by its references to the prætorian guard and to the saints of Cæsar's household and by its expressed hope that he may revisit Philippi in the event of his gaining his freedom. The date may have been 60 A. D.

Its Character and Contents. Paul had sent away his closest friends upon various missions, and he must have been often lonely as well as weak and depressed, not knowing what fate would befall him. Yet there are few touches of depression in the letter, which records his religion under trial. "It would not have been strange," as Dr. Abbott observes, "if such a man in such circumstances should have written a letter like the Forty-second and Forty-third Psalms. It would not be strange if in this letter were found hope struggling with despair in the alternate cry, 'O God, my soul is cast down within me!' and the answer, 'I shall yet trust in him who is my God'. But what do we find? Joy—thanks". He who could sing in the dungeon at Philippi could also sing in the prison at Rome. It is a remarkably cheerful, confident letter, full of inspiration as well as of joy. The words *rejoice* and *joy* occur thirteen times in its four brief chapters. Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice (4.4) may be called its keynote.

In this letter Paul has no doctrinal error and no special evils to rebuke, as in his letters to the Galatians and the Corinthians. It is an intensely personal little letter, written to friends who were very near and dear to his heart, and shows the apostle's noblest side, adding much to our knowledge of his inmost life.

Dr. McGiffert does not speak too strongly when he says that the whole Epistle, with its warm expression of affection, with its hearty recognition of the devotion of the Philippians, and with its unaffected gratitude for their liberality, combined with its kindly and yet frank and earnest admonitions, furnishes one of the most charming illustrations we have of the apostle's personal character, and of the closeness of the ties which bound him and his coevals together.

The Outline.

I. The Salutation. 1.1-11.
II. Information concerning Himself, and Other Matters of Special Interest to the Philippians. 1.12-26.
III. Various Exhortations. 1.27-2.18.
  1. To Christian Unity and Courage. 1.27-30.
  2. To Lowliness of Mind. 2.1-10.
    a. The Mind of Christ. 2.5-10.
  3. To Zeal and Blamelessness. 2.12-18.
IV. Plans in Regard to Timothy and Epaphroditus. 2.19-30.
V. Further Exhortations and Admonitions. 3.1-4.9.
  1. Warnings against the Enemies of the Cross. 3.1-3, 18-19.
  2. Autobiographical Notes. 3.4-14.
  3. A Call to be Like-Minded. 3.15-17.
  4. The Heavenly Citizenship. 3.20-4.1.
  5. Concerning Euodia and Syntyche. 4.2-3.
  6. Rejoice, Pray, and Meditate. 4.4-9.
VI. Expression of Gratitude. 4.10-20.
VII. Conclusion: Salutation and Benediction. 4.21-23.

As Literature. Philippians is most informal and discoursive in style. It is far from being a theological treatise, like the Epistle to the Romans, or a controversial document, like the Epistle to the Galatians, but is the most gracious of all Paul's letters to the Churches. It is thoroughly letter-like, just as unsystematic as friendly letters of today are wont to be—perhaps herein lies a part of its charm.

Lessons for Today. Bishop Lightfoot's words are true: "To all ages of the Church—to our own especially—this Epistle reads a great lesson. While we are expending our strength on theological definitions or ecclesiastical rules, it recalls us from these distractions to the very heart and center of the Gospel—the life of Christ and the life in Christ. Here is the meeting-point of all our differences, the healing of all our feuds, the true life alike of individuals and sects and churches; here doctrine and practice are wedded together; for here is the 'Creed of Creeds' involved in and arising out of the 'Work of Works'."

In the spirit which Paul shows throughout his letter we see the nobleness and beauty of thoughtfulness and sympathy, gentleness and tenderness, independence, courtesy and gratitude, joyful triumphing over the most adverse circumstances, splendid trust in God's purposes, and absolute devotion to the Master's service. And in addition, there is a blending of "the restfulness of faith with the tenseness of aspiration" which furnishes our day and generation with a most needed lesson.

The letter abounds with spiritual truths. There is the great declaration which tells of Paul's complete Christ-centeredness, and sums up his whole outlook upon life:

> For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain, 1.21.

There is his rule for right living:

> Let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, 1.27.

His exhortation to lowliness of mind:

> In lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself; not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others, 2.2-4.

His classic passage about the humiliation of Christ which shows what should be the spirit of a Christian:

> Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus; who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being formed in fashion as a man, he

humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross, 2.5-8.

His statement about him to whom allegiance is due:

Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name: that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father, 2.9-11.

His upreach of desire:

That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, 3.10.

His matchless passage about his singleness of aim in life, his striving for the goal of Christ-likeness:

But one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, 3.13, 14.

His exhortation to good cheer: the essence of his epistle:

Rejoice in the Lord always: again I will say, Rejoice, 4.4.

His counsel concerning worry and his praise of prayer:

In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thought in Christ Jesus. 4.6, 7.

His beautiful words telling how to grow in spiritual life:

Finally brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things, 4.8.

His words concerning contentment:

I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therein to be content. I know how to be abased, and I know also how to abound, 4.11, 12.

The source of all his strength:

I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me, 4.13.

And finally his assurance:

My God shall supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus, 4.19.

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

By Whom Written. The title in the oldest manuscripts is simply "To the Hebrews". Tertullian (160-220 A. D.) refers to it as "Barnabas to the Hebrews". Origen (185-253 A. D.) concludes his discussion of its authorship by saying, "Who wrote the Epistle God only knows". By the fifth century it was almost universally ascribed to Paul, and it is still often, and conveniently, grouped with his letters.

There is nothing in the Epistle itself to tell us who was its writer. Recent conjectures as to its authorship are Barnabas, Silas, Apollos, Clement of Rome, Priscilla, but the only thing certain is that it was written by a brilliant Christian who was perfectly familiar with Jewish laws and ceremonies. Delitzsch aptly compares it to the Melchizedek referred to in its central portion: "Like him it marches forth in lonely, royal, and priestly dignity, and like him it is without genealogy". Fortunately, its inspiration and value are not dependent upon our knowing who wrote it, and since we may not ascribe it to Paul with certainty, the words of Thiersch are pertinent here: "If it should be found that a noble picture, which had been attributed to Raphael, was not by that artist, there would not be one masterpiece the less, but one great master the more."

To Whom Written. It is addressed to Christian believers of the race of Israel, to those who "by reason of the times ought to be teachers", and yet there was need of some one's teaching them "the rudiments of the first principles of the oracles of God." 1.12. Whether they belonged—as has been conjectured—to the church at Jerusalem, or Alexandria, or Rome, or Ephesus, or

Corinth, they were Jews who were in danger of apostasy, perhaps because of persecution from the Roman power under Nero, or from their own countrymen who rejected Christ, or because they were depressed by the death of James and other leaders or by the prolonged delay in the return of Christ, which they had confidently expected in their lifetime.

The Occasion for the Letter and its Date. The grave danger that those addressed might give up their belief in Christ and return to Judaism led to the writing of the letter.

It was known in the Roman Church by the end of the first century, for "The First Epistle of Clement", a letter sent by the Church of Rome to the Church of Corinth about 95 A. D., contains sentences evidently quoted from it. Since it makes no reference to the destruction of Jerusalem (70 A. D.), as would have been most natural in such a document had it already taken place, it has been assigned to about 68 A. D.

Its Character and Contents. The Epistle to the Hebrews has very little resemblance to a letter. It calls itself "a word of exhortation", 13.22, and the letter-like details are mainly in 13.18, 19, 22-24. It might be styled "A Theological Discourse"; Dr. A. B. Bruce calls it "The First Christian Apology for Christianity".

The Epistle has a very definite aim which throughout is kept to the fore. It is a brilliant exposition of the superiority of the revelation of God in Christ to all revelation preceding Christ. The central thought is that God's final word has been spoken through his Son. The theme is stated in the first two verses: God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in his Son. It shows that the things which its readers had valued so highly were only types and shadows of things unseen and eternal. It compares Christ with the leaders of the Old Dispensation, and shows his superiority: Christianity has all that Judaism had in a higher degree and greater measure, and has accomplished what Judaism failed to accomplish, man's redemption: therefore it would be folly for Christians to return to Judaism; let them remain true to their Christian faith.

Its Outline.

I. The Didactic Part. 1-10.
  1. The Supremacy of Christ. 1.1-8.13.
    a. Christ Superior to the Angels. 1.1-2.18.
    b. Christ Superior to Moses or Joshua. 3.1-4.13.
    c. Christ Superior to Aaron and the Priesthood. 4.14-8.13.
  2. The Sacrifice of Christ. 9.1-10.39.
    a. The Sacrifices of the Old Covenant Unable to Perfect the Worshipper. 9.1-10.
    b. The One Sacrifice of Christ Himself has put away Sin. 9.11-10.18.
    c. Exhortation to Accept the Sacrifice. 10.19-25.
    d. For Wilful Sin there is No More Sacrifice. 10.26-31.
    e. Exhortation to Steadfastness. 10.32-39.

II. The Practical Part. 11-13.
  1. The Achievements of Faith. 11.1-40.
  2. Exhortations to Patience and Self-renunciation. 12.1-29.
  3. Social and Religious Duties Enjoined. 13.1-17.

III. Conclusion. 13.18-25.

As Literature. Coleridge gives as a reason for not believing Paul to have been the author of this Epistle the fact that its plan is "so studiously regular". There is a regular sequence of premises and conclusions, not obscured by the parenthetical observations, and great skill is shown in the careful arrangement of words and the rhythmical structure of sentences. It is a literary gem of great beauty.

Lessons for Today. While the argument as a whole is technically Jewish, no careful student of Hebrews can fail to understand the impression which it made upon Bishop Westcott. "No work", he says, "in which I have been allowed to spend many years of continuous labor has had for me the same intense human interest as the study of the Epistle to the Hebrews."

"When I turn to this great Epistle", Dr. J. H. Jowett says, "I feel as though

I were in the inspiring spaces of some great cathedral, as though I were moving about Westminster Abbey; in fact, I have ventured to call the Epistle to the Hebrews the Westminster Abbey of the Bible. There are some beautiful little side chapels, where a weary soul can bend in quiet and reverent prayer and praise; some most winsome light breaks through quite unexpected windows, as you move about in the august place; again and again you hear the sound of an anthem raising melodious songs of praise to the great God; and you are never allowed to get far away from Calvary and the cross. When I come to Chapter Eleven I always feel as though I were turning into the nave of the great cathedral, and I find it is occupied by monuments which have been erected to commemorate saintly men and women who were distinguished by their faith,—a monument to Abraham, a monument to Isaac and Jacob, a monument to Sarah, one to Rahab."

There are many admonitions to "Stand fast" which we may take to heart, as 2.1; 3.12, 13, and similar passages. There is the warning as to the impossibility of hiding from God: "For the word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and laid open before the eyes of him with whom we have to do". 4.12, 13. Then follow the beautiful words of comfort for the tempted: "Having then a great high priest, who hath passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but one that hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" 4.14, 15: see also 2.18. Having Christ as our Mediator, "Let us therefore draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace to help us in time of need", 4.16.

Meditate upon the strong words of 5.7, 8 concerning the human experience of Christ; concerning his sacrifice, 9.12-14; concerning the privilege of drawing near to him, 10.19-25; and concerning the Fatherhood of God, 12.5-10.

Commit to memory the words which teach the fear of the Lord—"It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God", 10.31; those which define faith and tell of the need of faith—"Faith is assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen,.....and without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him", 11.1, 6: those which urge us to endure in life's race—"Therefore let us also, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and perfector of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and hath sat down at the right hand of the throne of God", 12.1, 2: those which explain why trouble and suffering come to us—"All chastening seemeth for the present to be not joyous but grievous; yet afterward it yieldeth peaceable fruit unto them that have been exercised thereby, even the fruit of righteousness", 12.11: the practical exhortation of 13, 2, 5, 6: and the beautiful words about Jesus—"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, yea and for ever", 13.8.

THE REVELATION OF JOHN

The Title. In the original Greek the title is Ἀποκάλυψις (Apocalupsis, Apocalypse) which means uncovering, unveiling. Our word *Revelation* comes from the Latin translation of this Greek word. The Book is an unveiling of things hidden. "The Revelation of John", the whole title, is usually abbreviated to Revelation.

A truer title is given in the first verse: The Revelation of Jesus Christ unto his Servant John. A manuscript of the eleventh century bears the title, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ given to the Theologian John".

The Writer. The writer refers to himself as John, the servant of Jesus Christ, 1.1. In 1.9 he speaks of himself as in exile on the island of Patmos. John the Apostle was exiled there, according to early Christian tradition, and

tradition says also that he was the writer of Revelation. Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, who had known Polycarp, the disciple of the Apostle John, declared (about 180 A. D.) that the book was written by the Apostle. Those who deny the Johannine authorship do so mainly on the ground of the great dissimilarity between the language and style of Revelation and the Fourth Gospel or the three Epistles of John. As well might one say that no one could be an artist both in marble and in colors as was Michelangelo, or a writer both of abstruse mathematical treatises and fairy tales for children as was the author of "Alice in Wonderland".

John's life covered practically the whole first century. He was a native of Galilee, tradition says of the town of Bethsaida. His father was Zebedee, a fisherman who had hired servants (Mk. 1.20), and his mother was Salome, one of the women who ministered unto Jesus with their substance (Lk. 8.3); they were people of considerable means for those times. John was evidently a follower of John the Baptist when Jesus called him to be his disciple. His close, sympathetic friendship with the Master is shown by the phrase applied to him, "the disciple whom Jesus loved". John was one of the favored three chosen by Jesus to be with him at the raising of Jairus' daughter, at his transfiguration, and in Gethsemane. John's love stood the test when all the other disciples' failed, and he followed his Master after his arrest into the palace of the High Priest; he stood by the cross, and to his care Jesus committed his mother. With Peter he ran to the sepulchre on the morning of the Resurrection and saw and believed. He was the first to recognize his Risen Lord upon the shore of Galilee.

Nothing is recorded about John's activity as an apostle after Christ's death, save that he is associated with Peter in the first eight chapters of Acts, and is mentioned by Paul as one of the three pillars of the church at the time of the Council in Jerusalem (Gal. 2.9), until in Revelation we find him on the isle of Patmos. An early and direct tradition says that his last years of activity were spent in Ephesus, that he was banished to Patmos by the Roman power (Nero, according to the tradition; Domitian, according to Irenæus), was given his freedom (under Nerva) and returned to Ephesus where he died. Jerome dates his death 68 years after the death of Christ.

In Rev. 1.9, John declares that he was on the isle that is called Patmos "for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus", and he was a partaker with the churches in tribulation. As many were suffering at the hands of the Roman Emperor, so he was suffering. Professor Ramsay believes that the milder forms of exile were reserved for Roman citizens and persons of rank, and that John's penalty was hard labor of some kind, probably in the mines, preceded by severe beating, and accompanied by perpetual fetters, scanty clothing, insufficient food, sleep on the bare ground or in a dark prison, and work under the lash of military overseers.

The Date. If 11.1 indicates that the temple was still standing, and 17.10 that Nero was on "the throne of the beast", the book was written before the conquest of Jerusalem in 70 A. D. (about 68 A. D.), unless we accept the belief of some scholars that these portions belong to an earlier apocalypse incorporated in the book. A very ancient tradition tells us that the book was written near the close of Domitian's reign, about 95 A. D.

Other Apocalypses. The word *Apocalypse* is a technical term applied to a particular kind of writing. The earliest apocalypse—indeed the prototype of all others—is the Book of Daniel. During the century before Christ and the two centuries after Christ (175 B. C.—225 A. D.) many examples of this particular kind of writing arose. The "Book of Enoch", an apocalypse mentioned in the Epistle of Jude, and the "Fourth Book of Esdras", or "Esra", written about the time that the Apocalypse of John was written, were regarded by many of the early fathers as inspired.

The prophets of Israel could say, "the word of the Lord came to me"; they were orators who delivered God's messages to their own age in words of mingled warning and encouragement. The apocalyptists, their successors, were writers who were seers and wrote what have been called "Tracts for Bad Times", messages intended to encourage the righteous who were suffering persecution or were in despair because the promises made through the prophets seemed unlikely of fulfilment. By means of a series of visions concerning the

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present or of pictures of the future, they comforted their people with the great fact that "the Lord reigneth", and assured them that deliverance was at hand.

The apocalyptists revelled in strange and mysterious figures seen in visions and explained by angels. They made use of earlier materials, especially of the symbolism in the book of Daniel. Professor Swete reminds us that the current art was pagan to the church of the first century, and the church had neither the power nor the desire to execute statues or paintings of the Glorified Christ; instead, it was permissible to appeal to the faith of the suffering churches by means of symbolic visions of the majesty of their divine Lord, now walking in their midst, now standing before the celestial throne, now riding forth to victory over the armies of Heaven under his command. It was not less permissible to paint in glowing colors the moral glory of the Christian society, and her magnificent destiny, or to place in contrast with them the abominable vices, the paltry display, and the certain doom of Rome.

The writings of the apocalyptists were "pseudonymous", that is, they were written in the name of some great man who had lived long ages earlier, like Enoch, Abraham, the twelve Patriarchs, Moses, Baruch, Isaiah, Ezra, etc., but this was done with no intention to deceive, being a recognized literary method of the times.

The Character of the Book of Revelation. The great Christian Apocalypse, the Revelation of John, though having the language and the purpose of other apocalypses, is far different from the others in origin and value, as is proved by its being incorporated with the New Testament writings. It is not pseudonymous; it comes from the pen of John who was consciously a prophet, speaking as moved by the Spirit of Christ.

The book has the form of an Epistle. There is the customary salutation (1.4) and the customary conclusion (22.21) of an Epistle, and there are letters at the beginning addressed to each of the seven churches for whom the whole was primarily written.

Revelation is classed as a prophetical book, the only one in the New Testament. John calls his writing an apocalypse (Revelation) in the first verse, but after that he refers to it as a prophecy, 1.3; 22.7, 10, 18, and to himself as a prophet, 10.11; 22.6, 9. It is a prophecy written in the particular literary form known as apocalypse. We must keep in mind the fact that prophecy in the Bible is not wholly nor mainly predictive, a foretelling of far distant events. Our last year's study of the Old Testament prophets showed us that they were men inspired by God to interpret past and present events to their own generation; they showed God's dealings with men through the great movements of their own times and those imminent in the future; they wrote history from the Divine standpoint. The great Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament were uttered, not to predict future events in detail, but to forecast God's method of dealing with man's salvation.

Prophecy tells us what God said to the prophets. Apocalypse tells us what God showed to the prophets. Apocalypse is prophecy visualized, pictured by means of a vision that gives the picture of that which is prophesied; it cannot be interpreted literally.

As Professor Richard G. Moulton says, Revelation is a poem. The interpreter of Revelation should have prepared himself by appreciation of the world's greatest poetry; he should have studied Milton and Dante, the rhapsodies in the books of Isaiah, of Joel, of Habakkuk. Above all he should have mastered the visions of Zechariah; these, with their dream form, dream within dream, and visions rising one out of another like a series of dissolving views, make the nearest approach to the imaginative impressions of the New Testament Apocalypse.

The Interpretation of the Book. Revelation is the most difficult book in the New Testament, and many Christians dismiss it with the thought that it is composed wholly of dark sayings which no one can understand. No other book in the Bible has been the subject of so much controversy by those who try to understand it.

Write therefore the things which thou sawest, and the things which are, and the things which shall come to pass hereafter, are the themes of the book, stated in 1.19. The first three chapters, which contain the introduction and the letters to the seven churches, plainly deal with "the things which thou sawest, and the

things which are". Does the remainder of the book deal wholly with the things which shall come to pass hereafter, and is the hereafter far in the future?

There are four views held in regard to the main part of the book, and one's interpretation of any section depends upon which of the four views he accepts concerning the main drift of the book. These four views, or schools of thought, are known as the Futurist, the Historical, the Spiritual, and the Preterist.

The Futurist interpreter believes it all concerns events which will immediately precede the Second Advent and the end of the world. The number belonging to this school is now small.

The Historical interpreter finds in the book a revelation of events dotted over the face of history, from the early days of the church until the end of the world. As one readily sees, this school of thought could not well have come into existence until sufficient time had elapsed after the writing of the book for history to have been enacted on to which the events could be fitted. At the time of the Reformation, reformers identified the Pope and the unreformed Catholic Church with the Antichrist, and the Catholics, in their turn, identified Protestantism with one of the Beasts and discovered that the mystic number 666 stood for Luther's name. The French Revolution was taken by many as a sign of the approaching end of the world. "The demonic figure of Napoleon, with the dramatic alternation of his fortunes, and more particularly his return to power for the 'hundred days', seemed to fit in marvelously with some of the predictions of the apostle." Much ingenuity was shown in schemes of calculation whereby by working backward from Napoleon and then forward the date of the end of the world was fixed. At the present writing, many of this school are asking whether the Great War is not Armageddon, and the end of all things at hand.

The Spiritual interpreter sees in every figure and symbol a representation of some good or evil principle common to every age, and to be understood spiritually. "According to this last method, the New Jerusalem, for example, is explained as representing the blessedness, even in this earthly state, of true believers whose lives are hid with Christ in God."

The Preterist school of thought finds in much of the book a reflection of the situation which was either past or present at the time of its writing, having to do with the struggle of the early church with the Jewish persecutors and the Roman power.

The book of Revelation was written to meet a real need of the churches to whom it was addressed. Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of the prophecy, and keep the things that are written therein, 1.3. We may safely assume that the churches knew how to interpret apocalyptic language. Symbolism, or picture language, has always been used and understood by orientals. If the book were all predictive of events which had not yet happened but most of which have happened since (Historical school), or all about events that will usher in the end of the world (Futurist school), it would not have met their needs nor would it have been intelligible to them. Moreover, allusions and figures are found to fit conditions of their time (Preterist school) without forcing the interpretation. The Two Beasts of the thirteenth chapter are the Roman Power and the Provincial Government; Babylon, the Great Harlot, of the seventeenth and eighteenth chapters, is Rome; the visions of the nineteenth and twentieth chapters picture the overthrow of the Empire, of Idolatry and of Satan. The spiritual interpretation of the predictions in chapter twenty about the Millennium, the thousand years during which Christ shall reign on earth, was first advanced by Jerome and Augustine; with them modern scholars agree. These words were taken literally by the early church. The twenty-first chapter is a vision of the final overthrow of evil and the setting up of the eternal kingdom of God.

The Purpose and Message of the Book. It was written to the churches in the western part of Asia Minor, most of whom were in need of reproof for heresy or immorality or worldliness, and all of whom were in need of comfort and strengthening of faith because of persecutions from those "that say they are Jews, and they are not, but are a synagogue of Satan" (2.9; 3.9), and from the Roman power. The times were dark and threatening. Tremendous events were happening. Rome was already "drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus" (17.6), and all the signs of the times

show that universal persecution of Christians was imminent. Christ had promised that he would be with them always, and yet they were persecuted; he had promised that he would come again, and his tarrying was hard to understand when they so needed his presence to deliver them.

How could these facts be reconciled with the promises, with the lordship of Christ and the providence of God? This was the problem whose answer God revealed to John. The Rev. S. D. Gordon suggests: "It is quite likely that during his imprisonment John had been brooding anew over the old prophecies, reviewing afresh events since the resurrection of Jesus—the growth of the Church and now the severe persecution, with himself a prisoner. And while he in no way doubts the unseen overruling Hand, yet he is seeking to get a fresh outlook into the future from the old prophetic writings. And through all this without doubt the Holy Spirit was brooding in unusual manner over this man, reviving early memory, bringing to his remembrance all things of other days, deepening impressions, bringing old facts into new perspective, giving clearer vision, mellowing and maturing both mind and heart into fresh, plastic openness to further truth."

The purpose of his writing is clearly stated in the first chapter. It is the vision of the Son of Man, Christ living, enthroned, and caring for his churches, holding them in his hands (1.16), that is the central thought of the whole. That vision was given to strengthen and encourage the Church in its time of dire need. "The situation called for just such a book as this, to the faithful a summons to endurance and a promise of early release, a vision of the next world that encouraged them to endure the present need; to the unfaithful a reproach and a warning, tender or stern according to the degree of their unfaithfulness, and upon the unbelieving and hostile world a denunciation of divine wrath to come."

The message of the book as a whole is clearly given in these words from the One Volume Commentary. The things which were seen, rich and mighty though they appeared, were temporal, about to pass away; but the things which were not seen were eternal and to abide forever. God was on his throne, and the future of the world was in the hand of Christ. The persecuting empire was inspired and supported by Satan, but God was stronger than Satan. Satan had already been conquered, essentially, by the work of Christ, and his overthrow, and the overthrow of his instruments, would soon be seen openly on earth. Rome, the presecuting empire, the heathen worship and priesthood, and the wicked of the earth, were all to fall before the conquering Christ. Last of all would be the general judgment, and then the incomparable and eternal bliss of the new Jerusalem. In these ways Christ would come, and come quickly.

Therefore let Christians bear manfully their perils and pains. There was nothing strange in the demand that was made upon them. Christ himself had endured before them. It was by death that he had won his victory, and their victory was to be won in the same manner. Therefore death for Christ was not defeat but overcoming, and great glory with Christ would be the reward of those who overcame.

The Symbolism of the Book. A little four-year-old caught sight of her mother's basket of spools. Its sides were round, and it had a rim about the top just like that of a bird's nest. She remembered how her big brother had held her up to look into a nest full of little birds and how she had put out her hand and the whole nestful of birdlings started up and fluttered away. She wondered if there were any birdlings in mother's workbasket. She was almost sure that something waved like a bird's wing. She was sure she heard a faint twittering. The birds would certainly fly if she put out her hand. Out flashed the little hand, the basket upset, and the little birds flew in every direction. They hid everywhere, behind chairlegs, and under the table and sofa. How happy she was! The birds were of all colors, and she began to play with them. Then came the mother, but mother understood when baby explained that it was a nest of little birds who had flown out and hidden themselves when she put her hand over it.

Like that mother, we must understand when we read the picture language of Revelation. Archbishop Benson once asked an intelligent and devout Bible student what was his idea of the contents of Revelation and received in answer

"It is chaos". If we learn to read picture language it need seem no more chaotic to us than did the upturned basket and scattered spools to the comprehending mother.

Dr. G. Campbell Morgan somewhere says that if he may mispronounce "signify" and read it "sign-ify," he thereby catches the key of the whole book of Revelation. It is a book of signs, measures, symbols, suggestions—a book of figures in order to enable us to understand facts that are infinitely finer than all figures than can be borrowed in order to illuminate the facts.

John's mind was stored with the imagery of the Old Testament, and from the Old Testament the symbols he uses are taken. There are some forty-five references to thoughts and words in the book of Daniel, and nearly as many to each of the books of Isaiah, Ezekiel and Zechariah, and there are many places where the words of the Pentateuch and of the Psalter were evidently in the writer's mind. The Old Testament passages are never quoted exactly but are employed and adapted; one commentator has listed 278 verses out of the 404 as containing allusions to the Old Testament writings, and another finds 400 such allusions in all.

Very striking is the symbolic use of numbers, especially the frequent recurrence of the number 7 and then of the number 12.

The Outline.

I. Introduction. 1.1-3.
   1. The Authoritative Source of the Writing. 1.1, 2.
   2. Blessed he that Readeth, Heareth, Keepeth its Words. 1.3.

II. Vision of Christ in the Midst of the Churches. 1.4-3.22.
   1. John's Greeting to the Churches. 1.4-7.
   2. John's Vision of Christ and Commission to Write. 1.8-20.
   3. Letters of Comfort and Admonition to the Seven Churches. 2.1-3.22.
      a. To the Church in Ephesus. 2.1-7.
      b. To the Church in Smyrna. 2.8-11.
      c. To the Church in Pergamum. 2.12-17.
      d. To the Church in Thyatira. 2.18-29.
      e. To the Church in Sardis. 3.1-6.
      f. To the Church in Philadelphia. 3.7-13.
      g. To the Church in Laodicea. 3.14-22.

III. Vision of the Heavenly Court. 4.1-5.14.
   1. The Heavenly Court. 4.1-7.
   2. Adoration of the Almighty. 4.8-11.
   3. The Sealed Book Committed to the Lamb. 5.1-5.
   4. Adoration of the Lamb as Redeemer. 5.6-14.

IV. Visions of Preparatory Judgments. 6.1-16.21.
   1. The Opening of the Seven Seals. 6.1-8.1.
      a. Series of Judgments Following the Opening of Six Seals. 6.1-17.
      b. Interlude. The Safety of the Church: Countless Multitudes before the Throne. 7.1-17.
      c. The Seventh Seal Opened. 8.1.
   2. The Blowing of Seven Trumpets. 8.2-11.19.
      a. Series of Judgments Following the Blowing of Six Trumpets. 8.2-9.21.
      b. Interlude. The Safety of the Church: The Angel with the Little Book. 10.1-11.14.
      c. The Blowing of the Seventh Trumpet, Proclaiming Mercy and Judgment. 11.15-19.
   3. The Church's Enemies. 12.1-16.21.
      a. The Woman and the Dragon (Satan the Great Enemy). 12.1-16.17.
      b. The Two Beasts. (The Roman Power and the Provincial Government, Two Great Enemies). 13.1-18.
      c. The Lamb and his Followers: Triumph and Judgment. 14.1-20.
      d. The Seven Angels and the Seven Bowls; the Last Plagues or Punishments. 15.1-16.21.

V. Vision of the Fall of Babylon, the Great Harlot (Rome). 17.1-19.10.

VI. Vision of the Overthrow of Satan and the Final Judgment. 19.11-20.15.
VII. Vision of the Descent of New Jerusalem (the Eternal Bliss of Heaven). 21.1-22.5.
VIII. Conclusion; Personal Words; Benediction. 22.6-21.

As Literature. The book of Revelation is true poetry, not that it is written in verse, but because it gives a succession of scenes which must be first grasped by the imagination.

A large portion of the book is written

> With hue like that when some great painter dips
> His pencil in the gloom of earthquake and eclipse.

When uncomprehended, it makes the same impression on the adult mind as it did upon the child mind of the poet Francis Thompson. To him it was "the pageantry of an appalling dream; insurgent darkness, with wild lights flashing through it; terrible phantasms, insupportably revealed against profound light, and in a moment no more; on earth hurrying to and fro, like insects of the earth at a sudden candle; unknown voices uttering out of darkness darkened and disastrous speech; and all this in motion and turmoil, like the sands of a fretted pool."

And with this there is the great contrast of the closing chapter, where we are surrounded by white robes and palms and crowns, and hear the promise of that glad day when there shall be no more sorrow nor sighing nor pain nor death, when God shall wipe the tear from every eye, the magic and haunting charm of whose words are not equalled, Canon Farrar thinks, by any passage in our greatest writers.

Lessons for Today. "I understand," exclaimed a high caste Hindu when first he heard chapters four and five read, and came to the words:

> Unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb, be the blessing and the honor, and the glory, and the dominion, for ever and ever.

"These are wonderful words," he thoughtfully added. They are wonderful words all of them in this book, and when we grasp their meaning we find they bring wonderful messages to us. Through it all we see Jesus Christ in the world's life of today, and we realize that though against him all the powers of evil be banded it is in vain, his cause is invincible. And through it all we see that we, whatever we may have to struggle against, may overcome in his name, may be more than conquerors through him that loveth us.

A careful study of the book may bring all to Dr. G. Campbell Morgan's experience, who writes: "There is no book in the Bible to which I turn more eagerly in hours of depression than to this, with all its mystery, all the details which I do not understand. I go back to it, to the throne, and to the Lamb as it had been slain; and my puzzled mind and troubled heart feel the healing virtue; and I hear the song, and am ready for another day's fighting, for I know that Jesus shall reign. Jesus who is the Lamb in the midst of the throne is God; and in his presence is the place of worship; and in his power is the place of refuge".

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Apennines
ADRIATIC SEA
Dyrrachium
Brundisium
Tarentum
IONIAN SEA
SICILY
Messina
Rhegium
Syracuse
MELITA (MALTA)
DALMATIA
MOESIA
ILLYRICUM
Via Egnatia
MACEDONIA
Berœa
Thessalonica
Mt. Olympus
Pindus Range
THRACE
Philippi
Neapolis
Amphipolis
Apollonia
SAMOTHRACE
BLACK SEA
Sangarius R.
Byzantium
Propontis (Sea of Marmora)
BITHYNIA AND PONTUS
PAPHLAGONIA
Halys R.
Ancyra
Tavium
KINGDOM OF POLEMON
GALATIA
Pessinus
ASIAN PHRYGIA
Troas
Assos
M. Ida
MYSIA
Adramyttium
LESBOS
Mitylene
Pergamum
Thyatira
ASIA
Sardis
Philadelphia
Apamea
Antioch
Iconium
Lystra
Derbe
Tyana
Cæsarea
CAPPADOCIA
Antitaurus Range
Cilician Gates
ANTIOCHUS
COMMAGENE
Syrian Gates
Tarsus
CILICIA CAMPESTRIS
KINGDOM OF ANTIOCHUS
Taurus Mts.
CILICIA TRACHEIA
Cydnus R.
Antioch
Seleucia
Orontes R.
SYRIA AND CILICIA AND PHŒNICIA
Laodicea
Salamis
CYPRUS
Paphos
Tripolis
Lebanon Mts.
Sidon
Tyre
Damascus
Ptolemais
Cæsarea
Samaria
Joppa
Lydda
Jerusalem
KINGDOM OF HEROD
Pergamus
Hermus
Sardis
LYDIA
Smyrna
Hierapolis
Ephesus
Magnesia
Lycus R.
Laodicea
Colossæ
Miletus
CARIA
Mt. Trogyllium
C. Trogyllium
PATMOS
COS
Cnidus
Rhodes
RHODES
Patara
Myra
LYCIA
Attalia
Cestrus R.
Side
PISIDIA
PAMPHYLIA
Perga
Taurus Mts.
High Road to the East
Gulf of Corinth
Corinth
Cenchreæ
Athens
ACHAIA OR GREECE
Sarronic Gulf
CHIOS
SAMOS
EGEAN SEA
Phœnice
CAUDA
CRETE
C. Salmone
Fair Havens
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
SYRTIS
SYRTIS
Cyrene
CYRENE
LIBYA
Alexandria
EGYPT
16°
20°
24°
28°
32°
36°
40°

FIRST QUARTER

LESSON I—JANUARY 2

THE ASCENDING LORD

Golden Text

**When he ascended on high, he led captivity captive,
And gave gifts unto men. Ephesians 4.8**

LESSON Acts 1.1-14 MEMORIZE verses 10, 11

1 The former treatise I made, O Theophilus, concerning all that Jesus began both to do and to teach, 2 until the day in which he was received up, after that he had given commandment through the Holy Spirit unto the apostles whom he had chosen: 3 to whom he also showed himself alive after his passion by many proofs, appearing unto them by the space of forty days, and speaking the things concerning the kingdom of God: 4 and, being assembled together with them, he charged them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, *said he,* ye heard from me: 5 for John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit not many days hence.

6 They therefore, when they were come together, asked him, saying, Lord, dost thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel? 7 And he said unto them, It is not for you to know times or seasons, which the Father hath set within his own authority. 8 But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. 9 And when he had said these things, as they were looking, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. 10 And while they were looking stedfastly into heaven as he went, behold two men stood by them in white apparel; 11 who also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye looking into heaven? this Jesus, who was received up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye beheld him going into heaven.

12 Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is nigh unto Jerusalem, a sabbath day's journey off. 13 And when they were come in, they went up into the upper chamber, where they were abiding; both Peter and John and James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James *the son* of Alphæus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas *the son* of James. 14 These all with one accord continued stedfastly in prayer, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

I. Introduction to the Book of Acts, 1-5.
  1. The Contents of the Former Treatise, 1-2.
  2. The Reality of Christ's Resurrection, 3.
  3. The Promise of Power, 4-5.
II. The Ascension, 6-11.
  1. The Question and Answer about the Kingdom, 6-7.
  2. The Great Commission, 8.
  3. The Disappearance, 9.
  4. The Promise of the Return, 10-11.
III. Waiting and Praying in Jerusalem, 12-14.

1. *The former treatise.* The Greek words τον πρῶτον λόγον mean literally the first word. Luke's first word, or former treatise, is the Third Gospel. Compare his introduction in Luke 1.1-4. "It will be of use for us to cast our eye upon St. Luke's Gospel before we enter upon the study of this book", observes Matthew Henry, "that we may not only see how this begins where that breaks off, but that, as in water face answers to face, so do the acts of the apostles to

the acts of their Master, the acts of his grace".—*I.* I, Luke.—*O Theophilus.* Nothing is known about this man to whom Luke dedicated both his Gospel and the Acts; in Luke 1.3 he is called "most excellent Theophilus", a phrase corresponding, perhaps, to the English phrase "Your Excellency".—*All that Jesus began both to do and to teach.* The Gospel of Luke records the beginning of Christ's work, the part that he wrought on earth; the Acts records the continuance of the work of the Ascended Christ through his disciples.

2. *The day in which he was received up.* The day of his ascension: see Lk. 24. 50, 51.—*After that he had given commandment through his Holy Spirit.* See Mt. 28.19, 20; Mk. 16.15-18; Lk. 24.49; Jn. 20.21-23; 21.15-17. "Christ's choice is always attended with his charge. Those whom he elected into the apostleship expected he would give them preferments, instead of which he gave them commandments" (*Matthew Henry*).—*The Apostles.* They are named in verse 13.

3. *His passion.* His suffering in Gethsemane and on the cross. Our word *passion* comes from the Latin *passio,* suffering.—*Proofs.* There is only one word in the Greek, and the RV (Revised Version) omits the adjective *infallible* of the AV (Authorized Version).—*Appearing unto them by the space of forty days.* Appearing to them at intervals during the period of forty days. These appearances are recorded in the Gospels, and in 1 Cor. 15.4-8.—*The kingdom of God.* This phrase occurs thirty-three times in Luke's Gospel. The things concerning the kingdom which Christ spoke between his resurrection and ascension are recorded in Mt. 28.19, 20; Mk. 16.15-18; Lk. 24.27, 44, 45; Jn. 20.21; Acts 1.4-8. With verses 3-14 compare Luke 24.36-53.

4. *Being assembled together with them.* Probably in Galilee, Mt. 28.16.—*The promise of the Father.* The promised gift of the Holy Spirit. See Lk. 24.49; Jn. 15.26.—*Ye heard from me.* See Lk. 12.11, 12; Jn. 14.16.

5. *John indeed baptized with water.* See Lk. 3.16; Jn. 3.5; Mt. 3.11.—*Ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit.* "The truest conception of the Holy Spirit is that of the *alter ego* of the Exalted Christ. He is the one through whom Christ can continue in immediate, living touch with every one of his dependants" (*Robert Drummond*). "What is spirit? The spirit thinks and wills, and loves and denies. The Holy Spirit comes to spirit. Spirits can intermingle like fragrance and air. So when the Holy Spirit baptizes the human spirit it is through mixing thought with thought, affection with affection, desire with desire, and will with will" (*Jowett*).—*Not many days hence.* Ten days intervened between the Ascension and the baptism in the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

6. *Dost thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?* How hard it was for them to give up the current expectation that the Jews were to be made the dominant nation of the earth, politically and religiously! On their last journey to Jerusalem with their Master they had supposed that the kingdom was immediately to appear (Lk. 19.11), and now after the crucifixion they still cherish their expectation that Jesus was to establish his kingdom on earth, whose capital was to be Jerusalem, whose members were to be the Jews and their Gentile proselytes, whose influential men were to be themselves, and whose king was to be Jesus. Only after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost did they completely grasp the truth that Christ's kingdom is not of this world.

7. *He said unto them.* By his answer Jesus gently rebuked their curiosity, not their error. "His answer implies that he will restore the kingdom to Israel; not however, to 'Israel after the flesh', as the Apostles imagined, but to 'the Israel of God', *i. e.* to Christian believers of every nation, by making Christianity the dominant religion throughout the world" (*Dummelow*).

8. *But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you.* "They were still looking at the things that are seen and their Master was still looking at the things that are not seen. They were looking for the re-ordering of circumstances. He was looking for the transformation of character. They were asking for carnal dominion, he was for a spiritual dynamic. They wanted to make a broken people into a kingdom. He was waiting to make individual men into kings. 'Lord, wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom?' 'Ye shall become kings, when the Holy Spirit is upon you'" (*Jowett*).—*Ye shall be my witnesses.* The Book of Acts records the story of their fulfillment of this commission. "The sum of the Gospels is, 'Christ's life for us'; the sum of the Acts is, 'Our lives for Christ's children'."—*In Jerusalem.* Chapters 1-7 tell this story.—*In all Judæa and Samaria.* Told in chapters 8.1-9.35.—*Unto the uttermost part*

of the earth. Represented by Rome, the capital of the Empire, the place where, as Irenæus said,"All meet from every quarter". Chapters 11.19-28-30 record the work beyond Palestine. Beginning at Jerusalem, the capital; then in Judea, the country around; next in Samaria, the adjoining region, and finally to "the uttermost part of the earth", is the method by which the world was to be evangelized. "This message always hurts me when I think of the vast tracts of earth that have never heard the name of Christ" (*G. C. Morgan*).

"Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
Doth his successive journeys run,
His kingdom stretch from shore to shore
Till suns shall rise and set no more."

9. *When he had said these things.* See the Historical Background.—*As they were looking.* See Lk. 24.51.—*He was taken up and a cloud received him out of their sight.* "One might ask, Whither did our Lord go when he took his departure from this earthly scene? It would be a very childish notion to say that he went up and up, far above the most distant star. We all know, today, that there is neither up nor down in this visible universe. If we were transported to the moon, we would see the earth shining over our heads. We sometimes speak of heaven as 'up' somewhere beyond the stars, as though if we went up far enough, we should come to it. But this is merely a conventional form of speech. It has the same significance as to say the sun rises. The sun, in reality, never rises. The Heaven is neither up somewhere nor down somewhere. In the ascension of Christ we are told that he was taken up; but this is only an accommodation of language. It is no more an accurate form of expression than to say that the sun rises. What was the ascension in reality? It was Christ passing from the seen world to the unseen world" (*George H. Ide*).

10. *Two men stood by them in white apparel.* This is the usual way in which angels are described, white being the emblem of heavenly purity. See Jn. 20.12.

11. *Why stand ye looking unto heaven?* They recall the apostles' minds to their duty on earth.—*Shall so come in like manner.* His going was a disappearing, a withdrawal from sight. His coming is an appearing, a manifesting of himself.

12. *A Sabbath day's journey off.* This expression means the same as "nigh unto Jerusalem", a little way off, no farther than a devout Jew would walk on the Sabbath. It has been estimated as a thousand paces, two thousand cubits, or six furlongs.

13. *Where they were abiding.* Where they assembled every day.—*Peter..... James.* The eleven disciples were all met together.

14. *These all with one accord continued steadfastly in prayer.* This was the first Christian prayer-meeting.—*Mary the mother of Jesus.* This is the last mention of Mary made in the Bible.

The Golden Text.—Paul's words are an indirect quotation from Psalm 68.18. For their meaning see p. 58.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

2. *The apostles whom he had chosen.* The Greek word for *apostle* is derived from a verb and a preposition meaning *to send away.* An apostle is *one sent, a messenger.* This was a name already given at this time to synagogue officials who were sent to other synagogues on any important mission.

3. *He showed himself alive after his passion by many proofs.* At this time there were four conceptions of the future: first, absorption into God; second, transmigration of souls, or living in another body; third, living in one's own body, embalmed for the purpose, or gathered from the four winds of heaven by a miracle at the resurrection, at the last day; and fourth, life in a disembodied state in a shadowy underworld. Out of the resurrection of Christ there grew a fifth conception respecting the future life; a strong, firm belief in the personal resurrection and the personal immortal life of the dead, based upon and inspired by faith in the fact that Jesus Christ had died and had arisen again from the dead. *Dr. Lyman Abbott,* in *The Life and Letters of Paul.*

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. Who was with Elijah when he was translated (one of our lessons this last year)? What was the last question asked of Elijah, what was his answer, and what did the answer mean? Tell the story of Elijah's disappearance from earth.

Luke's Two Treatises. During his public ministry, owing to the hostility of Pharisees and Sadducees, Jesus had not won the multitudes, and at his death his immediate followers numbered only a few hundred. He had, however, accomplished far more for his cause in taking complete possession of a few lives, awakening in these chosen disciples a firmly-grounded faith in him as the Messiah, and instructing and inspiring them so that they could continue his work after his departure. This intensive work Luke recorded in his Gospel; the extensive work, the spreading abroad of the good news, he recorded in the Acts.

Three Accounts of the Ascension. "Tarry ye in the city, until ye be clothed with power from on high": these words of Jesus are followed in Luke's Gospel by this brief account of the ascension: "He led them out until they were over against Bethany: and he lifted up his hands and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he parted from them, and was carried up into heaven. And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: and were continually in the temple, blessing God". Mark's record of the ascension is even briefer: "So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken unto them, was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God". Matthew and John give no account of the event. But Luke supplements his account in the Gospel by this account in the Acts which is our lesson text to-day. These verses contain the keynote of the book of Acts. See pages 23-26.

The Reason for the Ascension. Having died and risen from the dead, because it was not possible that he should be holden of death, it was not possible that Christ should suffer death a second time. Nor was it possible that he should live on among men for ever, his home a Mecca for those pilgrims who could visit it, faith in him as their Redeemer based on the fact that they had seen him with their own eyes, instead of their attaining to the spiritual blessedness of those who have not seen and yet have believed. It was necessary that his ministry should be changed from a visible to an invisible one, from Palestine to the whole earth, and so he disappeared from sight.

Why so Little is Said about the Ascension. At first thought it seems strange that more is not written about the stupendous fact of the ascension. Yet a little reflection shows us that it is not so strange, after all. For in the first place, the Resurrection was the amazing wonder to the disciples; that fast grasped, the Ascension followed naturally and necessarily. And in the second place, the disciples' later references to the Resurrection include the Ascension. They preached a risen and an ascended and glorified Christ.

Church Built upon the Traditional Spot of the Ascension, Mount of Olives

The time. May 18, A. D. 30.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

A week after his resurrection Jesus appeared to the disciples a second time at Jerusalem (Jn. 20.26), and later they talked with their Risen Lord on the shore of the sea of Galilee (Jn. 21.14). Again he met them in Jerusalem, probably in that upper chamber where the Last Supper had been held, and then after a farewell discourse he led them out of the city across the brook Kidron, and up the Mount of Olives till they were facing Bethany (Lk. 24.50), and there he parted from them. The "Church of the Ascension" is built on the traditional site.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Professor Palmer was once remonstrating with his wife, Alice Freeman Palmer, because she gave herself too freely to this one and that one, instead

of conserving her time and energy for her writing. Mrs. Palmer replied: "It is people that count. You want to put yourself into people; they touch other people; these, others still, and so you go on working forever."

Mrs. Palmer was right. She is, in truth, living on in the lives of those whom she directly inspired to truer and nobler living. She was following in the footsteps of the Master who put his Spirit into the spirits of his disciples and then went away confident that through them he could continue the work he had begun here on earth. And you are doing what Mrs. Palmer did: is it not an inspiring thought? You may not now see the results of your work—even the disciples, after all their Lord's oft repeated words about the nature of his kingdom, asked once more in those last days their senseless question in regard to his restoring to Israel a temporal kingdom, but the question did not disturb Jesus. "Ye shall be my witnesses," he said with assurance. And would it not be foolish for us to fret because we can not now see the results of our labor? If our teaching has been truly done it may be left with confidence to bear fruition.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. In the Yukon Valley in Alaska an Indian missionary lay dying. His work was unfinished; some one must take his place and carry it on; but who would do it? There was only an Indian lad with him, who had not known nor cared much about the work. "Amos," he said, "I am about to leave you, but I want to give you this book, God's Word, and I want you to read it. I want you to teach it to my people." After Amos had buried his friend, he sat down alone to read the book. He went back to the mission settlement and asked to be taught, and now he is carrying on the older missionary's work.

Jesus Christ had only a few short years in which to work here on earth. On his departure from earth, he bade his disciples carry on his work. How they obeyed and with what results our year's study will show us. In what book of the Bible is our lesson? An act is what somebody does, and "The Acts" is a book which tells us what the followers of Jesus did after he left them. What are the first five words of the Acts? Who is it who here says "I"? What other book did Luke write? What does he say he told in his "former treatise", which we call the Gospel according to Luke?

For Older Pupils. A review of the year's lessons, the purpose of the Book of Acts, and the keynotes in the first eleven verses. See pages 23, 24 of this book.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Jesus Lives

"Thou hast Conquered, O Galilean!" About 1900 years ago a Man was born in the Far East in a humble family of a subject race. He taught for two or three years, never outside his own country; not in the schools or universities, but in the fields, on the hillsides, and in the streets of the towns. He taught a curious doctrine that it seemed quite impossible to comprehend or to follow. He was opposed by the persons who were called the best and most religious people of his day. Finally these persons decided that he was too dangerous to be allowed to live. They put him to death, while those who stood by condemned and abused him.

When he died he had no great following, only a few humble, uneducated peasants, not one of whom really understood what it was their Teacher had meant. They looked for nothing further from him, and went back to their fishing or their farming. There was not then one written word of his in existence. All the words of his that the world has ever had consist of only a few pages. His life and his death would seem to be quite unimportant events in the world's history. Yet what results have come from them!

He has changed the course of history more than any other being who has lived. No king or conqueror or scholar or poet has to-day an influence compared to his. His teaching to-day, so far as it is understood, is accepted as authoritative over most of the world. Christendom asks, "What did he teach? What did he mean?" and when it agrees on that, the matter is settled.

He is also the most loved person in all history. Different ages have had their heroes who have been loved; no other hero in any age has been loved as he has been by all the ages. All over Christendom, and more and more in heathendom, the birthday of Jesus of Nazareth has become the greatest holiday and the gladdest day of the year.

Verily, "Thou hast conquered, O Galilean!" *Youth's Companion.*

Christ is Alive. Dr. Dale was once writing an Easter sermon, and when halfway through the thought of the Risen Lord broke in upon him as it had never done before. "'Christ is alive,' I said to myself; 'alive,' and then I paused. 'Alive,' and then I paused again; 'alive—can that really be true? Living as really as I myself am?' I got up and walked about, repeating 'Christ is living'; 'Christ is living.' At first it seemed strange and hardly true; but at last it came upon me as a burst of sudden glory; yes, Christ is living. It was to me a new discovery. I thought that all along I had believed it, but not until that moment did I feel sure about it. I then said, 'My people shall know it; I shall preach about it again and again until they believe it as I do now.'" For months after, and in every sermon, the living Christ was his one great theme, and there and then began the custom of singing in Carr's Lane on every Sunday morning an Easter hymn. *Dr. Marcus Dods,* in *Christ and Man.*

'Tis not Far to Jesus.

"'Tis not far to Jesus,
No, 'tis very near.
He is all around us,
He is with us here.

"If we want to love him,
Let us go and pray;
Then our hearts can find him,
Now, this very day."

II Witnessing for Christ

Why the Apostles could Witness for Christ. A small magnet is made of steel, but it has a power which ordinary steel does not have. A very small magnet can pick up nails, and larger ones can lift half a dozen heavy kegs of nails. What gives them this strange power of pulling other metals toward them? Small magnets have been rubbed against a very big magnet till some of the power of the big magnet has passed into the smaller ones. Our word *magnet* comes from *Magnesia,* a country in Asia Minor, where the loadstone was discovered in very early times. Jesus Christ is the Divine Loadstone, who attracts all the world to himself; his disciples are the magnets that gained their power through living contact with him. Ye shall be my witnesses, Jesus told them. They could be his witnesses because they had lived with him and knew him and loved him. They were able to say "We know Jesus", and they were able also to show by their lives that they knew him; back of their witnessing by words was their witnessing by works. The Book of the Acts of the Apostles tells us with what great results they bore witness to their Lord, for some of his power had passed into these men, who had been his close companions for the three years of his public ministry.

Can He Count upon You? Dr. McKenzie calls the faith of Jesus when he gave his command to his disciples, "the largest instance of faith the world has ever known". Jesus had labored three years and had met death on the cross. A little band of eleven faithful followers he could depend upon, and there were a few hundred others who believed in him. That was all. And yet he told them that he was depending upon them to make him known throughout the earth! Dr. McKenzie recalls Nelson's message at the Battle of Trafalgar when he wished to signal that "England confides that every man shall do his duty". "I have no word for 'confides' in my code," said the signal officer; "may I not say 'expects'?" And so the message was sent, "England expects that every man will do his duty". But "confides" was the better word, it has more heart in it; it beautifully expresses the thought of Jesus, for he confided that every one of them would do their duty. And they did.

In one of his books Mr. S. D. Gordon imagines a conversation between Christ

and the Angel Gabriel, soon after the Ascension. Gabriel says, "Master, you died for the whole world, did you not?" "Yes." "You must have suffered very much." "Aye, Gabriel, I cannot talk about that even to you; it goes too deep." "And do they all know about it down there?" "Oh, no; just a little handful in Syria know about it thus far." "Well, Master, what plan have you made to tell the world that you died for them?" And the Master is supposed to reply: "I asked Peter, and James, and John, and some more of them down there, just to go and make it the business of their lives to tell the others. And the others are to tell others, and the others yet others, and still others beyond, till the last man in the farthest reach has heard the story, and has been caught, thrilled and thralled by the power of it."

But Gabriel looks as if he could see difficulty in the Master's plan. And he says: "Yes, but, Master, suppose, after awhile, Peter forgets. Suppose John loses his enthusiasm, and simply doesn't tell the others. Suppose their successors away down there in the twentieth century get so busy about things, some of them good things—church things, maybe—suppose they get so busy that they do not tell the others, what then?"

And back came that quiet voice of the Lord Jesus. He says: "Gabriel, I haven't made any other plans. I am counting on them."

He is Counting on You.

"On a love that will share
In his burden of prayer,
For the souls he has bought
With his life-blood; and sought
Through his sorrow and pain
To win 'Home' yet again.
He is counting on you,
If you fail him—
What then?"

III The Great Commission

Our Jerusalem. A young man came to a pastor in the Southern Presbyterian Church and asked for Christian work. By questions the pastor learned how the man's time was employed. He arose at half past six and after breakfast went to his office where he worked steadily, save for a brief lunch period, until six o'clock. After supper he was "too tired to do much."

"When would you do Christian work if I gave it to you?" the pastor questioned. "I don't know." Then the pastor said: "God has so placed you, so filled your day, that I don't see where you can get time for much outside Christian work. But, see here, Murray, here's something for you to do. Do your work better than you ever did. Help the other fellow who is behind, if you can. Let all the men in your office know that you are a Christian, not by talking, but by living. Get in a helpful word here and there. Get some fellow to drop his oaths or his beer. Show Christ living in you and controlling you. Preach the gospel among your associates by the best life you can live with God's help. Will you try?"

The young man promised. A few weeks later the superintendent of the department where the young man worked met the pastor, and asked "What's come over Murray?" "I don't know," the latter replied, "I didn't know anything had". "Well, there has. He's the best clerk in the whole force, and has become so in the last month. He's the best influence about the whole place. The men all notice it. He's quiet, earnest, and full of a spirit that imparts itself to others. Something has come over Murray!"

Our Samaria. "You shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth." Our Jerusalem is, of course, the city where we live; our Judea, it is equally obvious, is our own country; the uttermost parts of the earth are, without question, all the continents outside of our own. But, where is Samaria? It is that portion of our continent which lies between our own country and another continent, namely Spanish North America. That is our Samaria. Shall we seek to appreciate this near national neighbor in the spirit of Jesus, who says that one of the two elemental, eternal, supreme, obligations is to love with a love that takes care of them, our neighbors, though they are of a nationality that we are in-

clined to disparage? How much do ordinary Americans think of Spanish-Americans? We are apt to think of them in about the way they used to think of the old Samaritans. Let us try to think of them in the way that Jesus thought of the Samaritans of his day.

When our forefathers came over to Plymouth, to New Amsterdam, to Virginia, most of them had a book in their hands, sixty-six pamphlets bound together in the most wonderful literature that the world ever has seen collected. We call it the Bible. Many of them had this book in their hearts as well as in their hands. All of them, whether they had the book in their hearts or in their hands, had a great amount of it in their heads. More than any other one factor, that is what has made Anglo-Saxon America as good as it is. The worst tendencies among us are due to loss of Biblical ideals.

The Spanish-American pioneers came without Bibles. The few that they did have were in Latin. Speaking in a general way, the Spanish-Americans did not bring Bibles. They came with swords and cut their way relentlessly to rule. A sword in one hand and a rosary in the other! The difference between the Anglo-Saxon civilization on this continent and the Spanish-American civilization, is due in large part to that initial difference. We have to give them the New Testament. That is the best gift we have for any neighbor. They receive the gospel when we bring it, and it goes to the root of the trouble in Spanish America and uproots it. It brings healing to our Samaria, as Christ coming to the old Samaria brought healing there. Condensed from *Elemental Forces in Home Missions,* by *Lemuel C. Barnes.*

Where the Responsibility Rests for the Uttermost Part of the Earth. The place of responsibility to-day is not with God, not with board secretaries, not with pastors, not with churches, not with missionary committees. It is with the individual Christian. It depends on you and me whether Christ's sacrifice at Calvary shall be a success or a failure. Will you make it your purpose by the grace and help of God to do all in your power by prayer, by influence and by self-denial, to get the gospel into vital contact with every living creature during your life time? *Ella D. MacLaurin* in *That Cobbler's Shop.*

The Heavenly Director of the Work. Our Golden Text gives Paul's words to the Ephesians, When he ascended on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. The Rev. G. A. Johnston Ross brings out its force. "The beautiful picture of our Lord in this passage represents one of the finest and boldest convictions expressed in the New Testament: that Jesus is alive, and that, clothed with the powers of God, he is regulating the lives of men in the interest of the final 'reconciliation'. Paul thinks of our Lord under the figure of a triumphant King or General, returning from war, standing on the hill of triumph, distributing, out of the spoils of war, gifts to those who had served him. The thought seems to have been in Paul's mind that the Lord Jesus, in his mission as the Incarnate Son, went through the world of man and nature noting its needs, and is now directing from heaven the movement for the satisfaction of these needs. His 'gifts' are men, whom he disposes and whose functions he differentiates, all with the final unity in view. This belief in a heavenly Director of men, himself Man, with experience of human life in its varied needs, is alone in the faiths of the world; it illumines all life for the man who can accept it, and is one of the most remarkable tributes on record to the powers and love of the Lord Jesus Christ."

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

Resolved—In the Year 1916—

To Watch—Selfward.
In order To know, and help, myself.
To Work—Manward.
In order To know, and help, my fellows.
To Pray—Godward.
In order To know, and help, my Lord.

Howard A. Walter.

Though Jesus has ascended to the Father, we may live in personal friendship with him as real as that enjoyed by the disciples here on earth. Have we so firmly grasped this great truth that it influences our life?

"To make Christ known should be the commanding purpose in the life of every Christian. Is there any one of us whose conscience, enlightened by the Holy Spirit, can feel and say, 'I have done, and am doing, all that in me lies to make a Savior's grace and a Savior's love known to the perishing nations of the world'?"

Our Prayer. We thank thee, O our Savior, that in thy going away from thy earthly ministry thou didst lay upon thy followers the work of telling others about thee and thy mission to the world, and that through them and thy followers down through all the ages since thou hast been finishing the work which thou didst begin on earth long centuries ago. We know that each one of us has a share in thy command to go and make disciples of all the nations. Help us to see the work which we may do as witnesses for thee in home or school or business, wherever we may be. We pray for the success of thy great ambassadors in the home and foreign mission fields. Hasten the glad day when all shall have heard the good news that thou art Jesus who died for the sins of the whole world, who rose again, and who art now alive for ever more, our ever present, eternal Lord and Savior.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The lesson of Ascension Day. See *The Outlook* for May 12, 1915, page 61; "Through Man to God" by Dr. George A. Gordon, page 299; "Ephemera Eternitatis," by Dr. John Kelman, pp. 131-143.

2. The attitude of Jesus toward the success of his mission. See the Second Topic; "The Call of the World," by W. E. Doughty, Laymen's Missionary Movement; A Plea for Unity and Co-operation in Behalf of the World's Evangelization, p. 417 of *Missionary Review of the World,* June, 1914.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. What happened between the Ascension and Pentecost? (Acts 1.12-26.) 2. How was the Day of Pentecost observed in Old Testament times? (Lev. 23.11-21; Dt. 16.9-12; *Guide,* p. 60.) 3. When did the Holy Spirit come upon Jesus? 4. What prophecy of the anointing with the Spirit did Jesus say had been fulfilled in him? (Lk. 4.17, 21.) 5. How many persons received the baptism of the Spirit at Pentecost? (Acts 1.15; 2.1.) 6. Besides the apostles, who are especially mentioned? (Acts 1.13, 14.) 7. What were the outward indications of the Spirit's coming? 8. What different views are held in regard to the meaning of the speaking with other tongues? (*Guide,* p. 61.) 9. In what two ways did the spectators interpret the manifestations? 10. How did Peter refute the sneering remark that the disciples were drunk, and how did its being only "the third hour" prove the refutation? (*Guide,* p. 71.) 11. What was the emblem of the Holy Spirit at Jesus' baptism? (Lk. 3.21, 22.) 12. Under what other emblems is he represented? (See the Subject-Index of your Bibles, under *God, the Holy Ghost, Emblems of.*) 13. On what occasions was fire a symbol to the Israelites of God's presence ? (See Subject-Index of the Bible, under *Fire, God Appears in.*) 14. What is said about the office of the Spirit in Jn. 16.7-15? 15. What is said about the Spirit as Comforter in Jn. 14.16-26? What is the fruit of the Spirit as given in Gal. 5.22 and Eph. 5.9?

Questions to Think About. 1. What is the human spirit? 2. What is the Holy Spirit? 3. Why did the Holy Spirit come to the disciples? 4. When did he come? 5. How did he come? 6. What do we say in the Creed about the Holy Spirit? 7. What do we mean by that? 8. Is it true that the presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of an individual is self-revealed? 9. What is the meaning of "began to speak with other tongues"? (*Guide,* ¶ 2, p. 61.) 10. What was the native language of the disciples? 11. What language was the universal language of the Roman Empire? (*Guide,* ¶ 6, p. 61.) 12. What purposes were accomplished by the "speaking with tongues"? 13. Was the gift permanent or transient? 14. There is a religious book entitled "Our Silent Partner"; who is meant by that phrase?

Memory and Note-Book Work. Begin a Note-Book entitled The Early Expansion of the Christian Church. To-day write Chapter 1, The Ascension of Christ and the Great Commission. (See ¶ 8, p. 21 of our Introduction, Suggestions to Teachers.)

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THE COMING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Golden Text

Know ye not that ye are a temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? 1 Corinthians 3.16

LESSON Acts 2.1-13 MEMORIZE verses 3, 4

1 And when the day of Pentecost was now come, they were all together in one place. 2 And suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. 3 And there appeared unto them tongues parting asunder, like as of fire; and it sat upon each one of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

5 Now there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. 6 And when this sound was heard, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speaking in his own language. 7 And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying, Behold, are not all these that speak Galilæans? 8 And how hear we, every man in our own language wherein we were born? 9 Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, in Judæa, and Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia, 10 in Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt and the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and sojourners from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, 11 Cretans and Arabians, we hear them speaking in our tongues the mighty works of God. 12 And they were all amazed, and were perplexed, saying one to another, What meaneth this? 13 But others mocking said, They are filled with new wine.

THE LESSON EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

I. The Coming of the Holy Spirit, 1-4.
  1. Waiting for the Spirit, 1.
  2. The Appearance of the Spirit, 2-3.
  3. Empowered by the Spirit, 4.

II. The Effect upon the Observers, 5-13.
  1. The Amazement of the Multitude, 5-12.
  2. The Mockery of Some, 13.

1. *The day of Pentecost.* Pentecost was one of the three great national festivals at which all male Jews were expected to present themselves in the temple. The feast of Pentecost was kept in remembrance of the giving of the law upon Mount Sinai. Pentecost means in Greek *fiftieth.* On the second day of the Passover festival the first ripe sheaf of barley, marking the beginning of harvest, was offered; and fifty days later, the day of Pentecost, two loaves, the first fruits of the new wheat, were offered, marking the close of the harvest. In the Old Testament it is called the Feast of Weeks (Dt. 16.8, 10) because a week of weeks (7 weeks) comes between it and the first day of the Passover; the Feast of Harvest (Ex. 23.16), because it was a feast of thanksgiving for the harvest (Dt. 26.5-10); and the Day of the First-fruits (Lev. 23.17-21) because of the offering made. The day is now known as Whitsunday.—*They were all together.* "They waited. It was like a ship with her sails set, watching for the breeze." (*Maclaren*).—In one place. In Jerusalem, presumably in the upper room mentioned in our last lesson.

2. *And suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of the rushing of a mighty wind.* Compare 1 Kings 19.11-13 and John 3.8. Luke represents the sound as miraculous in its nature; it was not wind, but wind is the only thing to which he can compare it.

3. *There appeared unto them tongues parting asunder, like as of fire.* The miraculous sound was supplemented by a miraculous sight. Something that

was not fire, but could only be compared to tongues of fire, they saw, which was distributed, a part resting on each one. The Spirit, like fire, purifies, cleanses. In the 29th Psalm, "The Voice of Jehovah in the storm", the lightning is described in these words, "The voice of Jehovah cleaveth the flames of fire". "The Hebrews gave the name of *tongue* to most things which terminate in a blunt point. So a bay is termed in Joshua 15.2, and in verse 5 of the same chapter what appears to have been a promontory is called a tongue of the sea" (*Clarke*). "We read the story of the miracle, and perhaps we can not understand it. It seems natural enough that when Jesus is born the sky should open and the angels sing, that when Jesus dies the skies should darken and rocks should break. The great events were worthy of those miracles. But here at Pentecost what was there to call out such prodigies? Was there not certainly enough? It was the coming back of God into man. It was the promise in these typical men of how near God would be to every man henceforth. It was the manifestation of the God Inspirer as distinct from and yet one with the God Creator and the God Redeemer. It was the blossom-day of humanity, full of the promise of unmeasured fruit" (*Phillips Brooks*).

4. *They were all.* Not the apostles only, but all the one hundred and twenty followers of Christ there present.—*Filled with the Holy Spirit.* "As a sponge dipped into the sea is filled with the ocean! We can be so open to God as to be filled with God" (*Jowett*). This is the great fact of Pentecost. The symbols which were like wind and like fire disappeared after a time; the accompanying gift of "speaking with tongues" was also transient, but the Spirit's presence was abiding, by his aid they were enabled to fulfil their great commission and proclaim Jesus Christ and the power of his resurrection to the uttermost parts of the earth.—*And began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.* Their words were inspired by the Spirit, and were of a different nature from their customary words. It is a disputed question whether they spoke in foreign languages which they had not before known, or whether their utterances were enthusiastic and ecstatic, the "gift of tongues" such as is described in the 14th chapter of First Corinthians. A sensible remark of Chrysostom's in regard to the latter passage is pertinent here: "The whole passage is obscure, but the obscurity is produced by our ignorance of the facts referred to, being such as used to occur, but now no longer take place".

5. *Dwelling.* Some of them were permanent dwellers, others only visitors to the festival.—*Every nation under heaven.* An exaggerated expression showing the wide dispersion of the Jews.

6. *Confounded.* Amazed.

7. *Are not all these that speak Galileans?* The twelve apostles (see ¶ 1, p. 63) were Galileans, but it is not likely that the hundred and twenty disciples (Acts 1.15) were all from the province of Galilee. Probably the word is used in the sense of provincial, untravelled, and unfamiliar with the languages of the countries whence the speakers came.

8. *And how hear we?* Only a miraculous power could have enabled these unlearned men thus to speak, they think, and in the effect upon the multitude we see one purpose of the gift.—*Our own language.* Latin was spoken in Italy, Aramaic in Palestine, and the various districts mentioned had their own special speech or dialect, but Greek was the universal language of the Roman Empire. They marvelled that coming from regions as far east as India and west as Rome, as far north as Pontus and south as Egypt, they yet heard the mighty works of God spoken in their various languages. Since then the native people of Alaska and of Tierra del Fuego, of Japan and of the islands of the sea, have heard the good news, each in his own language. When the disciples began their work the Gospels had not been written. Now they have been translated into nearly five hundred languages and dialects. Recently an Englishman left $4,500,000 to be expended in giving "to every tribe of the earth" at least the Gospels and the Book of Acts.

9-11. See the Geographical Background.—*Sojourners.* Many Jews were carried as slaves to Rome by Pompey the Great in 63 B. C. Their descendants became freedmen, *Libertini*, and they had their own synagogues in Jerusalem.—*Proselytes.* Gentile converts to the Jewish faith.

12. *What meaneth this?* The apostles knew the meaning. They knew that Jesus had said the Holy Spirit would come to them, and in the sound as of

wind and the sight as of tongues of fire and the speech of divers languages, they recognized the fulfilment of his words, a new proof to them of his Messiahship, and an assuarnce of inspiration and guidance in their work of witnessing for him.

13. *They are filled with new wine.* See Peter's defence, verses 14-21.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

3. *Like as of fire.* That unusual appearances of fire were considered emblems of the presence and influence of God, both the Scriptures and the Jewish writings amply prove. Thus God manifested himself to Moses, when he appointed him to deliver Israel, Ex. 3.2, 3, and thus he manifested himself when he delivered the law on Mount Sinai, Ex. 19.16-20. The Jews, in order to support the pretenses of their rabbis as delivering their instructions by divine authority and influence, represent them as being surrounded by fire while they were delivering their lectures; and their words, in consequence, as penetrating and exhilarating the souls of their disciples. Some of the Mohammedans represent divine inspiration in the same way. Nor was this notion of the manner in which divine intimations were given, peculiar to the Jews and Arabs; it exists in all countries; and the glories which appear round the heads of Chinese, Hindu, and Christian saints were simply intended to signify that they had especial intercourse with God, and that his Spirit, under the emblem of fire, sat upon them and became resident in them. The Greeks and Romans had similar notions of the way in which divine communications were given. Everything of this kind was probably borrowed from the account given by Moses of the appearance on Mount Sinai, for traditions of this event were carried through almost every part of the habitable world. *Adam Clarke* in *Commentary on the New Testament.*

9-11. *Parthians.....Arabians.* Just as to-day all the Mohammedan world journeys to Mecca, and as Mohammedans, Jews and Christians alike throng Jerusalem at Easter, so in those days, in the words of Philo, "many thousands from many thousands of cities streamed at every feast towards the temple". The Jew who could by any manner of means stand the expense, no matter in how distant a quarter of the Roman world he lived, went annually on a pilgrimage to the temple at Jerusalem, and every Jew of full age in other cities paid a tax of two drachmæ for its maintenance.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. What promise did Jesus make to his disciples shortly before his ascension? What does it mean to be "baptized with the Holy Spirit"? What effect did Jesus say the coming of the Spirit would have upon the disciples? For what purpose were they to receive power? Name the disciples. Where did they go while waiting for the fulfilment of the promise? What did they do?

Waiting for the Coming of the Holy Spirit. With the ascension we pass from the visible ministry of Christ to his invisible ministry in the Holy Spirit. The descent of the Spirit is to be associated with the ascent of Christ. "Behold, I send forth the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city, until ye be clothed with power from on high"; these are Jesus' last words to his disciples recorded by Luke in his Gospel (24.49). After he was parted from them, they obediently returned to Jerusalem and "with great joy" waited for the promised blessing. For carrying out their great commission they were naturally but poorly equipped; to begin to win the world for Christ at this time required more than human power. They were to herald great mysteries; they were to convince others that Jesus was the Son of God, that he was sent from heaven to take upon himself human nature, that he lived and taught as they alone could fully testify, that he willingly suffered death on the cross for the salvation of the world, and that he had arisen from the dead and ascended into heaven. Jesus Christ and the power of his resurrection was a theme at which the world would stumble. Only through power given them from on high could these human instruments accomplish their divinely given task.

Firm in their faith, true in their fellowship, and steadfast in their prayers, the followers of Christ awaited for ten days the fulfilment of the promise. Be-

sides the eleven apostles, there were met together the mother of Jesus and other women, his brethren, and others to the number of one hundred and twenty in all. Meanwhile Peter counselled that one of their number who had "companied with them" during all their life with their Lord, and who could be a witness with them of his resurrection, be chosen to take the place of Judas Iscariot. Two names were put forward, and prayerfully and reverently lots were cast according to the Old Testament plan. The lot fell upon Matthias, and he was regarded as the divinely chosen apostle.

The Time. Ten days after the ascension, May 27, A. D. 30.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

After Jesus was parted from them on the Mount of Olives, the disciples returned to Jerusalem and remained the ten days between the Ascension and Pentecost. Soon after dawn on the day of Pentecost they probably went to the temple for the sacrifices and the offering of the first fruits, and then assembled in the "Upper Room" of the house which was their headquarters. The traditional room shown to-day is on Mount Zion. It is reached by an outside stairway, and is large enough to hold the "multitude" mentioned in Acts 1.15. Its roof is supported by seven pillars. When the crowd arrived (verse 6), they probably assembled in the courtyard of the house.

The regions mentioned in verses 9-11 were the abode of *Jews of the Dispersion,* those dwelling outside of the Holy Land. Only a small proportion of the Jews lived in Palestine during the age of the apostles. Josephus represents Agrippa as saying that "There is no nation on earth that has not Jews dwelling among them". The location of each of the nations mentioned may be learned from the map.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

We need the Holy Spirit to inspire us and to compel us to be all on fire in our work. In his famous story of archery, Vergil represents Acestes as shooting his arrow with such force that it took fire as it flew and went up into the air all aflame, thus opening from the place where the archer stood a pathway of light into the heavens. We want to see that take place as the arrow flies from the teacher's lips. "I like," says a writer, "to hear a Frenchman talk; he strikes a light." That is our need in class.

Some one told the other day of a visit to a locomotive round-house: "One thing that impressed me much," he said, "was a notice, conspicuously posted, to this effect: 'No engineer allowed to take his engine out of this round-house with less than a hundred and twenty pounds of steam'". So shall we put it thus: "No teacher allowed to go to his class with less than a hundred and

twenty pounds of steam"? Why, some teachers do not even light the fire until they leave home for the Sunday-school! How, then, can they expect power when they get to their classes? *Condensed* from an article by *James Learmount.*

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. During a great battle the Duke of Wellington ordered a young officer to capture a battery that crowned a neighboring hill. The officer looked up to that hill top. He knew well that he was ordered to accomplish a great feat, a seeming impossibility. And then he turned to his commander and said, "I can go, sir, if you will give me one grasp of your all-conquering hand". The grasp was given, and the officer hastened to the capture. In our last lesson we heard the words of the Great Commander ordering his followers to capture the world for him. It was a seemingly impossible task. Christ knew the difficulties, and with the command he gave a promise of help. They were not to go to their task unaided, unencouraged, uninspired, but were to receive power from on high. To-day we see how that promise was kept.

For Older Pupils. In the Albert Memorial Chapel at Windsor there is a picture which represents David and other harpists of Israel holding their instruments in their hands, but their fingers touch the strings listlessly, and their heads are bowed: they cannot play, they are waiting for the inspiration from on high. If I had the artist's gift, I would paint a companion picture to that scene, the disciples sitting in that upper room with heads bowed, lips moving in prayer, waiting for the promised gift of the Holy Spirit, the power from on high, that should inspire them for their work of witnessing.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I The Holy Spirit

The Revealing of the Holy Spirit. In the "Holy Night" of Correggio, you remember how the stable of the nativity is lighted with the radiance which shines from the face of the Child. That is what the painter saw. Very likely the shepherds, who had already seen a celestial light in the sky, saw it glowing again in the stable. No doubt, the holy mother saw it. But to a casual passer-by or to a stable-boy coming in to feed the cows, there would have been no light except such as glimmered in the lantern. Probably the man in the street, hearing a commotion on the day of Pentecost in the upper room,—if that was the place,—and rushing in, would have missed all sound and hearing of the wind and fire.

On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit wonderfully revealed himself to the disciples, filled them with a new consciousness of his divine presence, and blessed them. That is, in the midst of a world which is full of God, suddenly this little company of holy persons were made aware of God. Out of the infinite silence, God spoke to them. And it was as if the wind blew which swept across the face of Elijah in the cleft of the rock; it was as if the fire blazed amongst them which Elijah saw before he heard the still small voice. That is as near as the narrator can get to it. *Dean Hodges,* in *The Human Nature of the Saints.*

Who is the Spirit of God? Jesus calls him the Comforter. "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may be with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth," he promised his disciples. A Comforter usually means to us some one who helps us when we are in sorrow or trouble, but the word *comforter* comes from the French language and really means *strength-bringer;* the Comforter whom Jesus promised is the Holy Spirit who strengthens us for service. The New Testament, you know, was originally written in the Greek language, and our word Comforter is the translation of a Greek word which means "one who hears another's call". So when Paul wrote to the Corinthians that "Ye are a temple of God and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you", he told them that the Spirit of God was now so near to them that he heard them when they called, and that he was with them, as the great Strength-bringer, to give them strength when they were weak, or in need, and above all to strengthen them for service.

Mr. D. L. Moody used to say that "the Holy Spirit is God at work"; and you may think of him as God at work in your hearts, teaching you and strengthening you.

A delicate little woman who, though more than seventy years of age, continued to go out to work as a seamstress, awakened the surprise of the daughter in one of the families for which she served. "How can you work so hard and so steadily?" she asked her. "Well, sometimes it is hard," replied the patient voice. "Often I get up in the morning feeling so weak and faint that it seems impossible to go through the day's work. But, you see, I'm like a trolley car before it is connected with the power wire. The first thing I do is to connect with the Power. When I have prayed, I feel God's power passing through me, his Spirit in my heart, and then I am strengthened and can go on and do what I have to do."

The Portrait out of the Frame. The father of a small American lad had been in India for several years, and every morning and every night the boy looked long and earnestly at his father's portrait as it hung on the wall. One day he said to his mother, "Mother, how I wish father would come out of the frame!" Dr. Horton told this incident and drew from it this beautiful thought. "If you may take Jesus Christ to be the portrait of the Father, the Holy Spirit is the way in which that portrait comes out of the frame, out of the frame of the Gospel story, a living, working, reality, into the life, into the soul of the person who receives the Holy Spirit".

II The Spirit of God Dwelleth in You

The Beautiful Spirit.

Uncle. On an island where the people are Christians of a sort, though they have some curious beliefs, they told me a strange tale about the ghost of Jesus Christ. According to them the Lord could not be happy in heaven, because he was so sorry for the poor and sorrowful and sinful on the earth, so he left his glorious body in some secret chamber, and came as a disembodied spirit to continue his work of healing, and comforting, and saving his human brothers and sisters.

Edith. But why leave his body? Did the people say?

Uncle. I suppose they would say that it might dazzle men's eyes, and only set them staring and wondering to no purpose. But he could no longer put his fingers on blind eyes, or touch a leper, or speak a word that men could hear. So he was obliged to try to use the hands and tongues of mortals to do his merciful deeds and speak his wonderful words.

Tom. How could he do that? Oh, I think I understand. Something like wireless telegraphy or brain waves.

Uncle. I can't tell you how they believed it was done, but whenever a man spoke wisely and helpfully to others, or did some brave, kind action, they said, "The Beautiful Ghost has visited him," or "The Beautiful Ghost has put it into his heart."

Edith. But it isn't true—is it, uncle?

Uncle. Something very like it is true, if I rightly understand what Jesus meant when he said: "I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you". When we talk of the Holy Ghost and the Spirit of Christ, don't we mean very much the same as my friends who spoke of the Beautiful Ghost of Jesus? If we remembered that every right thought and good feeling came into our minds from him, we should have more courage to put them into practice, and if we remembered also that the Spirit of Christ must work through human hands and speak to men through human lips, and desires to have our hands and voices, I think we should not greatly need to puzzle our brains as to the meaning of the Beautiful Ghost. *J. A. Hamilton,* in *The Wonderful River.*

Spirit-Filled Men. In a sermon recently Dr. John Douglas Adam, speaking upon the text, "Be filled with the Spirit," emphasized the fact that we need not pray for the Holy Spirit to come, for he has come already, he is but waiting for us to give him his opportunity. And then Dr. Adam spoke about the difference between men having the Spirit and the Spirit possessing the men. There is a difference between nature in winter and nature in summer. The trees have life in winter as well as in summer, even though the branches are bare; but in summer they have abundant life. Some men have the Spirit, others are pos-

sessed by the Spirit. The problem is to turn the fact of men having the Spirit into the greatest fact of the Spirit having the men.

III Empowered

A Modern Pentecost. Something of the same thing has happened again and again since that great Day of Pentecost. General Sir Francis Younghusband writes of what he himself witnessed and experienced in a meeting in South Wales during the revival of a few years ago:

"I arrived one night at a chapel an hour before the time announced for the meeting, and the place was already full. People were sitting in their places quietly waiting the revivalist, talking to one another, or praying, when suddenly a man in the gallery ejaculated, 'O God!' in such heartpiercing accents that what seemed like an electric shock went stinging through the chapel. In an instant all felt tightly held in some vehement spiritual tension. Men prayed aloud with all self-consciousness completely swept aside. They poured out their whole souls in utter disregard of other men's existence. The strain almost reached breaking point. Men were wrenched and overturned by some mighty force. Men, women, and even little children got up and said they would burst if they could not speak. Then something within would snap; and in prayer, or in song, or in confession, they would pour themselves forth with an ease and a fluency and a compelling sincerity which no preacher or orator could approach. Yet it was ascertained that after the meeting they had not the slightest remembrance of what they had said. Their whole workaday selves had been swept aside, and their deep, inner, unknown selves had come surging to the surface and had spoken with the directness and conviction to which only the deeper self can attain.

"It was not for some days after that I was struck by the full force of this tremendous spiritual impulse. Then it came on me with such terrific force I had to struggle with all my might to keep it down. It surged through me with such intensity I could not have borne it a moment longer. And when it at last calmed down, it left me in a state of ecstatic exaltation. All life seemed of one rose-colored hue and intensely bright. The troubles and trials of life appeared mere trivialities. All sordidness and baseness were shot through with a radiance that utterly purified their dross. And heaven seemed for the moment established here on earth."

What Kind of Dynamic does the Holy Spirit Bring to Men?

If the Holy Spirit were to take possession of your life to-day, what change would it make? I am not now speaking of conversion, which is a different matter; I am speaking of the distinctive gift, the distinctive reception of the dynamic which is called in Acts 1.8 "the power of the Holy Spirit". I think the only way to answer that question is to see what difference it did make. What change took place in the character of the disciples? What addition was made to their equipment? What did they lose? What did they gain? What happened to Peter when it was Peter plus the Holy Spirit, and what happened to John when it was John plus the same great, benign, but mighty ministry? What difference did it make? These men, when they received the Holy Spirit, had an extraordinary power of spiritual apprehension, that is, when they got the power of the Holy Spirit, they had a certain powerful, exquisite, delicate feeling for God. Our Lord himself, describing the disciples of the earlier days, describes them as slow—which means dull, dull of heart, blunt in spiritual perception, dull to catch the spiritual presence, and therefore the spiritual sides of things. But if you will read the Acts of the Apostles through, then you will find that when they received the gift of the Spirit, they could not get away from the sense of God's presence. Wherever they went, whichever kind of road it was through which they were walking, troubled and difficult, or smooth and leisurely, they felt their Lord was about them. It was just as though a man were sitting in a room in the presence of another man, but his senses were closed, and he had no realization that the other man was there, and then, suddenly, there came an awaking of the physical senses of sight and hearing, and he saw his friend.

I look again at the lives of the apostles when they had received the power of the Holy Spirit, and I ask what else distinguishes them, and I find a magnificent force of character. In the early days they were timorous, they were pliable,

they were unfaithful, and in the supreme crisis they deserted their Master by flight. In the early days they were like reeds shaken by the wind. They were negative, hesitant, uncertain; they were altogether lacking in strong, persistent force. But when the power of the Spirit came they became stiff, steady, positive, effective. They had light, they had the clarity of a clear, true purpose, you could not take them from the track. They had the fire of a quenchless enthusiasm. They were burning and shining lights. *Condensed* from a *Sermon* by *Dr. J. H. Jowett.*

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

Paul closes his second letter to the Corinthians with this great benediction: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all." For us, as for those Corinthian Christians, there is no blessing more needed than "the communion of the Holy Spirit."

The power given the disciples at Pentecost was given them to be used; they were to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. All spiritual power is for use in God's service.

Our Prayer. We thank thee, O Holy Spirit, that thou, the Spirit of God whom Christ, our Savior, promised, who didst come in the miracle of Pentecost, art forever here, an ever-present, ever-helping God. Even our hearts are thy temples; may we gladly let thee have control of our thoughts and words and deeds. Temples should not be dark, gloomy, cheerless: make our hearts fit abodes for thee. May we do what thou wouldst have us do, showing in our lives those fruits of the Spirit called love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Glossolaly, or the Gift of Tongues. See Mk. 16.17; Acts 2.1-16; 10.44-48; 11.15; 19.1-7; 1 Cor. chapters 12, 13, and 14, especially 14.2, 18, 19, 39; 1 Thess. 5.19-21. See "Speaking with Tongues," *Missionary Review,* July, 1908; "The Word and the World," *International Review of Missions,* Jan., 1913.

2. The Person and work of the Holy Spirit. See "The Holy Spirit in Practical Life," and "The Holy Spirit in the Life of To-day," *Sunday School Times,* April 25 and Dec. 26, 1908; Chapter I of Dr. J. H. Jowett's "The Transfigured Church."

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. To whom did Peter give his address? 2. Where? 3. How did he answer the charge that the disciples were drunk? 4. What did his answer mean? (*Guide,* ¶ 5, p. 71.) 5. Where is the quotation in verses 34 and 35 from? (Psalm 110.1.) 6. For what purpose did Jesus once quote the same words? (Mt. 22.43-45; Mk. 12.34-37.) 7. What is the argument from the quotation from David? (With verse 34 compare verses 29-31.) 8. What is the great theme of Peter's address? 9. What three kinds of proof did Peter give? (*Guide,* p. 71.) 10. With this sermon compare Peter's other sermon to the Jews, Acts 3.12-26. 11. When had Jesus told his disciples that they should do greater works than he had done? (Jn. 14.12.)

Questions to Think About. 1. Why was Peter's sermon necessary at this time? 2. Compare Peter at the trial of Jesus and Peter at Pentecost: how do you account for the change? 3. How does the presence of the Spirit's power in Peter declare itself? 4. In what ways does his address show great skill? 5. Where last had that crowd heard the words "Jesus of Nazareth"? 6. What are meant by "mighty works and wonders and signs", verse 22? 7. What is meant by "the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God"? (*Guide,* p. 69.) 8. What is meant by "Hades"? 9. What is meant by "Being by the right hand of God exalted"? (*Guide,* p. 69.) 10. What is meant by "till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet"? (*Guide,* p. 69.) 11. What is the meaning of "They were pricked in their heart"? 12. Judas, too, was pricked in his heart, convicted of sin, but he was not converted; why? 13. By being baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, what confession did the people make concerning him? (*Guide,* p. 70.)

Note-Book Work. Write Chapter II, Empowered by the Holy Spirit.

PETER'S SERMON AT PENTECOST

Golden Text

Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. Acts 2.21

LESSON Acts 2.14-47: verses 22-24, 29-41 printed MEMORIZE verses 38-39

22 Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God unto you by mighty works and wonders and signs which God did by him in the midst of you, even as ye yourselves know; 23 him, being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hand of lawless men did crucify and slay 24 whom God raised up, having loosed the pangs of death; because it was not possible that he should be holden of it..... 29 Brethren, I may say unto you freely of the patriarch David, that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us unto this day. 30 Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins he would set one upon his throne; 31 he foreseeing this spake of the resurrection of the Christ, that neither was he left unto Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. 32 This Jesus did God raise up, whereof we all are witnesses. 33 Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he hath poured forth this, which ye see and hear. 34 For David ascended not into the heavens: but he saith himself,

The Lord said unto my Lord,
Sit thou on my right hand,
35 Till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet.

36 Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified.

37 Now when they heard *this,* **they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brethren, what shall we do? 38 And Peter** *said* **unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For to you is the promise, and to your children, and to all that are afar off,** *even* **as many as the Lord our God shall call unto him. 40 And with many other words he testified, and exhorted them, saying, Save yourselves from this crooked generation. 41 They then that received his word were baptized: and there were added** *unto them* **in that day about three thousand souls.**

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

I. Peter's Sermon, 14-36.
  1. Introductory Defence, 14-15.
  2. Jesus Proved both Lord and Christ, 16-24.
    (a) By his Fulfilling of Prophecy, 16-21; (b) by his Miracles, 22: (c) by his Death and Resurrection, 23, 24.
  3. Jesus' Resurrection, 25-33.
    (a) Prophesied by David, 25-31, 34-35: (b) Witnessed by his Followers, 32: (c) Attested by the Coming of the Holy Spirit, whom he Promised, 33.
  4. Conclusion and Climax of Sermon, 36.
II. Effect of the Sermon, 37-41.

22. *Ye men of Israel.* The crowd of Jews mentioned in our last lesson.—*Hear these words.* Meditate upon what they mean for you. Peter is the speaker: see the Historical Background. The Spirit's power has completely changed the craven denier of his Lord into a fearless defender who dares

PETER

From a Painting by T. König

even to accuse the slayers of their murder, giving no longer a thought to his own safety, but thinking only of his Lord and his Lord's work—truly he has taken up his Master's cross and is following after him.—*Jesus of Nazareth.* They had despised him because he was a Nazarene, and Pilate had had this title put on the superscription of the cross.—*A man.* Peter's sermon begins with Jesus as man, but it ends with Jesus as Lord and Christ, verse 36.—*Mighty works and wonders and signs.* These are terms by which a miracle is defined in the Gospels.—*Which God did by him.* So Jesus ascribed the power to God, in Jn. 14.10.

23. *Being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.* It was all in accordance with God's will: see Lk. 22.22; Jn. 3.16; Gal. 4.4, 5.—*By the hand of lawless men.* By the Sanhedrin who acted contrary to law, and by the Romans who were not governed by the sacred law.—*Ye did crucify.* Recall the outcry of the people, "Crucify him, crucify him".

24. *Having loosed the pangs of death.* The expression is from Ps. 18.4.

25-28. A quotation from Ps. 16.8-11. In connection with this quotation Alford remarks, "David often spoke concerning himself, but the Spirit who spoke in David, spoke concerning Christ".

29. *His tomb is with us unto this day.* David was buried on Mount Zion, 1 K. 2.10; Neh. 3.16. According to Jerome the tomb was known in the fourth century.

30. *Knowing that God had sworn to him with an oath.* The promise is given in 2 S. 7.12-16: see also Ps. 89.3, 4; 132.11.—*He would set one upon his throne.* The promise referred primarily to Solomon.

31. *He foreseeing this spake of the resurrection of the Christ.* Peter ascribes to David a prophetic meaning in the words of the Psalm quoted in verses 25-28. See Alford's remarks, above. "Peter does not again quote David's prophecy, but states, as a fact, that the Messiah was not left subject to death, as an evidence that the prophecy of David, not perfectly fulfilled in his own experience, was fulfilled now—in the experience of Jesus the Nazarene" (*Abbott*).—*Hades.* The realm of the dead.

32. *This Jesus.* About whom he had been speaking, verses 22-31.—*Did God raise up, whereof we all are witnesses.* The apostles considered it their special duty to witness to Jesus' resurrection, Acts 1.22. Peter gives three proofs of the resurrection: (1) the witness of all the disciples (verse 32); (2) the confirmation of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (He hath poured forth this, which ye see and hear), verse 33; (3) the prophecy of David, verses 34 and 35.

33. *By the right hand of God exalted.* "The right hand of God in the strong style of Hebrew poetry means that our Lord is now on the throne of power. It is the fulfilment of his own words as recorded at the end of Matthew's Gospel, 'All power is given me in heaven and earth'" (*Richards*). The words may also be taken as stating that the exaltation was by means of the right hand of God, that is, by the power of God.

34. *David ascended not.* Hence the quotation that follows can not refer to himself.—*The Lord.....feet.* This quotation is from the 110th Psalm (verse 1), which is entitled, "Jehovah gives Dominion to the king. A Psalm of David." The King is not David himself, but the Messiah, of whom the Psalm is a prophecy. In Mt. 22.43-45 and Mk. 12.35-37, Jesus quotes these words and attributes to David divine inspiration in thus speaking of the Messiah. Peter uses the words to prove that Jesus is both Christ and Lord, verse 36.—*The Lord said unto my Lord.* Two different words for *Lord* are used in the Hebrew here: the meaning is, Jehovah said unto my Messiah.—*On my right hand.* Jesus is made a partaker of the divine glory and dominion.

35. *Till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet.* Compare Heb. 10.12, 13. It is an expression denoting complete victory, and originated, doubtless, from the ancient custom of conquerors putting their feet on their enemies' necks.

36. *Therefore.* Because the resurrection and ascension of Jesus agree with the prophecy, he must be the Christ.—*Lord and Christ.* Sovereign and Messiah. This verse is the climax of Peter's sermon.

37. *They.* See verse 6.—*Pricked in their heart.* Convicted of sin. "There must be added unto this pricking in heart, readiness to obey. Cain and Judas were pricked in heart, but despair did keep them back from submitting them-

selves unto God" (*Colvin*, quoted by *Abbott*).—*And said unto Peter and the rest of the apostles.* The first "inquiry meeting".—*Brethren.* Peter, likewise, had called them Brethren, verse 29.—*What shall we do?* They are convicted of having crucified and slain the Christ, verse 23, and they now ask what they can do about it, how they can be freed from this terrible guilt.

38. *Repent ye.* See Jesus' words in Lk. 24.47.—*Be baptized.* See Jesus' words in Mt. 28.18, 19.—*In the name of Jesus Christ.* In being baptized they acknowledged that Jesus is what his name of Christ signifies, the Messiah or Redeemer. "There is reason to suppose that at the very first, at Pentecost and for a little while after, the only name spoken at the baptism, either by minister or convert, was the name of Jesus Christ. We can well understand why it should be so. His personality was the one thing that had made religion real to these converts. This Jesus Christ, the Crucified, the Risen—this was their confession of faith. They were baptized therefore into his name, and the creed that sprang from their lips was, 'I believe in him.' But we know that the formula was soon enlarged to what we find prescribed in the closing verses of Matthew's Gospel, and what we still use at baptism in our churches—that is, 'the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit'. This, however, should not be taken as a new formula, or creed, but only the old enlarged, the meaning coming out more clearly as men meditated on it longer" (*William R. Richards*).—*Unto the remission of your sins.* The object of accepting Jesus as the Christ.—*Spirit.* See Acts 8.17; 10.47. Dr. Abbott comments upon this verse: "In getting the exact meaning of Peter's directions to these inquirers, observe, (1) Repent is literally *to perceive afterwards*, and hence *to change the mind*, including one's view of life and truth, and hence one's purpose. Here it includes an entire change of opinion respecting Jesus Christ, from regarding him as an imposter to reverencing him as both Lord and Christ; but it also includes all that change of interior life and purpose which is consequent thereon. (2) *Be baptized* follows in order the direction to repent. Baptism is not a regenerating experience, but a sign and symbol of repentance and a public confession of Christ. (3) *In the name of Jesus Christ*, with an acknowledgment of him as the sinner's only hope, his Redeemer, Justifier, Lord, final Judge. (4) *For the remission of sins* is for the putting away of sins, the entire cleansing of the heart from actual sin, as well as the pardon of those that are past."

39. *To you is the promise.* Acts 1.4. "The promise had at first been of material blessings, *e. g.* the land of Canaan, but as these were obtained and yet the ideal was not attained, the content of the promise grew deeper and more spiritual until it became the promise of the presence of God himself in his Spirit" (*Rackham*).—*All that are afar off.* This may refer to the Jews who were scattered abroad, and it may refer to the Gentiles for it is an expression often used for Gentiles in both the Old and New Testaments. If the latter is meant, Peter at this time, of course, thought of the promise as being to the Gentiles only in case they became Jewish proselytes.

40. *Save yourselves from.* From sharing in the guilt and penalty of.—*Crooked. Untoward*, in the Authorized Version, means not toward, not docile, hence perverse. A perverse and crooked generation, Dt. 32.5.

41. *They that received his word.* Who accepted his words as true.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

34. *David ascended not into the heavens.* The Jews were wont to speak of a number of "heavens," or realms above the earth. According to Rabbi Abia, there were six ante-chambers, as it were, or steps, to the seventh heaven, where God Himself dwelt. There are several references in the Scriptures to "the third heaven"; the first heaven was held to be the firmament; the second the region of the stars; the third, the throne of God.

41. *They then that received his word were baptized: and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls.* It has been pointed out that "that day", according to Biblical usage, need not necessarily mean the day of Pentecost, but may rather mean "that period", the first epoch in the life of the Church. This interpretation has been adopted by many on account of the seeming impossibility of three thousand persons being baptized in one day in Jerusalem, where water was not abundant. But there were numerous pools

encircling the city, some of them still in use, and the habits of the East would not prevent these public reservoirs being used for this purpose.

42. *They continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching.* It must not be forgotten that no part of the New Testament was written at this time. The apostles taught from memory the lessons of Jesus' life and words. In the second century, after the Gospels were written, these were read at the weekly services for worship of Christian churches.

43. *Breaking of bread.* "The Jews' bread was baked in cakes and divided for distribution by breaking, and apparently the head of the house would begin the meal by solemnly breaking bread and giving thanks over it; and so the term *breaking of bread* came to denote this commencement of a meal with blessing."

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. How many followers of Christ were met together at Pentecost? While waiting for the promised gift of the Holy Spirit, what were they doing? Who is the Holy Spirit? What had Jesus told his disciples they should do after they received the power of the Holy Spirit?

The Occasion for Peter's Sermon. Simon Peter, who seven weeks before Pentecost had been afraid to admit to a maidservant that he was one of Jesus' disciples, was on the morning of Pentecost "filled with the Spirit," and boldly stood up and proclaimed to the great crowd of native Jews of Jerusalem and Jews from distant lands that Jesus was the Christ, the Redeemer of the world, and moreover did not hesitate to charge them with the sin of having crucified the Christ. First of all he answered the charge of some of those present that the followers of Jesus were "filled with new wine"; this could not be, he said, for the simple reason that it was but nine o'clock in the morning. (On festival days no Jew would eat or drink before ten or even noon.)

His Great Sermon. Peter was speaking to Jews, and his object was to prove to them that Jesus fulfilled Old Testament prophecies and expectations in regard to the Messiah. The events which so amazed them were but the fulfillment, he told them, of Joel's prophecy (Joel 2.28-32), that at the coming of the Messiah God's Spirit would be poured forth, and old and young, men and women, bond and free, would see visions and speak Divine truths. Then he took up his great theme that Jesus was the Christ, and gave three proofs. First, Jesus had wrought many wonders of which they themselves were witnesses. Second, he had been crucified and slain, all in accord with God's high purpose, for death could not hold him, God had raised him from the dead to higher life and wider power. Of the fact of the resurrection he and all the apostles were witnesses, and, furthermore, the resurrection and exaltation fulfilled two prophecies of the Psalms and thus proved Jesus the Messiah. Third, this coming of the Holy Spirit, at the manifestations of whose power they were all amazed, confirmed the truth that Jesus lived and cared for his followers, for he had sent his Spirit. Jesus was, in truth, both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom they had crucified.

The Result of the Sermon. In our first lesson of the year we heard the promise of power given by Jesus to his disciples; last week we saw that promise of power fulfilled in the coming of the Holy Spirit; to-day we see the effect of the Spirit's coming in the power realized. Peter's words, especially the appeal to prophecy, were convincing to the Jews, and the home-thrust at their consciences pierced their hearts, "Brethren, what shall we do?" they asked. "Repent and be baptized," Peter answered. They must not only repent of their sin, but they must change their views in regard to Jesus; the one whom they had regarded as a false Christ, they must accept as the true Christ, and acknowledge this by being baptized "in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of their sins". The gift of the Holy Spirit's power should be theirs, for the promise was to those afar. And many other words Peter spoke, urging them to save themselves from sharing the guilt and fate of their perverse generation. About three thousand believed his words and were baptized.

The Life of the Christian Community. All these new converts became members of the Christian community, and were steadfast in their attention to the teaching of the apostles, lived with wonderful unity and comradeship with the rest, and shared in the breaking of bread and in the public prayers.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Early in the morning on the day of Pentecost the apostles and all the disciples were in "the upper room" at Jerusalem where Jesus had so often met with them. When the crowd collected about the building they doubtless descended to the courtyard below, and here, probably, Peter delivered his sermon.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Note that Peter began his talk by securing attention, and he secured it by recalling to his hearers' minds something which they themselves knew—the mighty works and wonders which God had wrought through Jesus in their midst.

Study Peter's talk and note his aim through it all and how he steadily led up to it till he brought his truth home to his hearers with telling force that this Jesus whom they crucified is both Lord and Christ. So convincingly did he speak that he accomplished his purpose, for his hearers were pricked in their heart and said, "Brethren, what shall we do?" That was an aim worthy of all his efforts.

Do you ever come before your class without any aim for the lesson's teaching? Is your aim ever small in comparison with the exertions you put forth? Is your aim sometimes defective? Do you hit, as well as aim?

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. A Highland chieftain named MacGregor fell wounded in a great battle, and the clan wavered, utterly dismayed at his loss, and were in danger of giving way to the enemy. The old chieftain saw this, and raising himself on his elbow, the blood streaming from his wound, he called to them: "I am not dead, my children; I am looking at you, to see you do your duty." His words revived their courage, and they won the day. So that little Christian clan, who wavered and might have given up the cause when they saw their Great Chieftain wounded, was inspirited to win the day through the knowledge given them that he was not dead, but was looking on from his place of power to see them do their duty. How bravely Peter fought his Chieftain's cause we hear to-day. Where did we leave him and the other disciples last week?

For Older Pupils. When Lincoln was nominated for the presidency of the United States it was said that he was an uneducated, uncultured man, and therefore could not write presidential speeches; it was clear that some one would have to write them for him. But Lincoln wrote his own speeches, and they are rightly accounted worthy of a place among the world's best literature. His speech at Gettysburg could be neither more skilful nor more beautiful. Lincoln's heart was in his words, and, God was with him. We may truly say that his words were inspired.

Had it been said to anyone at Jerusalem in the first century who knew Peter that Peter was to be the first one to take up the work of Christ, that one would have said that Peter was an ignorant fisherman, he could not make a logical, forcible, persuasive speech, some one would have to tell him what to say. But on the morning of the Pentecost he made an address so remarkable that many in these days say it could not have been reported by Luke just as Peter gave it. But Peter's heart was in his words, and he was inspired.

Dr. Stigler says of this address: "In its adroitness, in the arrangement of the arguments, in its analysis, in its steering clear of Jewish prejudices, in its appeal and effect, it is without a peer among the products of uninspired men. As an expression of persuasive argument it has no rival. The more it is studied the more its beauty and power are disclosed. Men like Luther and Wesley have won a large following after years of patient toil. But who, save the fisherman of Galilee, won it in a day? God was with him. The matter can not be explained unless we admit the outpouring presence of the Holy Spirit."

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Whosoever shall Call on the Name of the Lord shall be Saved

Salvation is Free. We are saved by grace. That is, our salvation is not earned or won by us; it is not got by any deserving of our own; it comes purely as a divine favor. That is what grace means—free, unmerited love and

kindness. We should get this thought clearly fixed in our minds. Some people seem to think that God owes them mercy, that they have earned it. But we deserve nothing save wrath. Salvation is the gift of God. We cannot buy it. There is a story of a woman whose daughter was ill, and who sought at a garden gate to buy some grapes for her child. The gardener treated her harshly, but the king's daughter who was near heard her piteous request and brought her all the grapes she could carry. The woman wanted to pay for them, but the princess answered: "My father is the king. He does not sell grapes—he gives them." God does not sell favors of his love—he gives them freely. *Dr. J. R. Miller,* in *Paul's Message for To-day.*

There is No Other Name Given among Men, wherein we must be Saved. A German preacher imagines that the Last Judgment has come. The books are opened. The day of reckoning is here. One after another stands before the Judgment seat. A group of Mohammedans appear. "Mohammed is our surety," they say; "we are his followers." "Then go to him; he will have to be judged for his own sins."

Countless Chinese approach. Confucious and many other good teachers are surety for them. But their sins are not thereby covered; the teachers themselves must have some one to cover their own sins.

Then follow those who deem themselves righteous in themselves. But their own righteousness can no longer be recognized in the light of the Judgment Throne, and now they see that they have been self-deceived.

Peter in a later address before the Sanhedrin told those self-righteous men the truth, that in none other save Jesus Christ is there salvation, for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved.

A missionary was reading this address of Peter's to a group of women in Tyre when suddenly one of them, a Metwalie (a bigoted Moslem sect), said: "I have grasped it! Let me explain. Why, of course, Christ is the Savior, no one can save but Christ, his name is the Name. If you had a son and servants in your house, whose word would be accepted, the word of the servant or the word of the son? Certainly the word of the Son! All the prophets compared to Christ are only servants, but Christ is the Son."

Religion Should be Positive. The attitude of many of our churches is too much that of apology. Of what possible use is a religion that needs excuses, that lays a humble finger on your sleeve and begs pardon for taking even a moment of your precious American time? You should beg pardon of religion for taking one moment of the time that belongs to God.

Religion should be positive, militant, triumphant, the voice of one crying in the wilderness, "Repent, repent!" The preacher should make his message so simple that he is absolutely sure of it, more than sure of it,—possessed by it, enthralled by it,—so that it shall spring right out of him, and make others listen, although all the din of modern business and pleasure be in their ears. He should tear the delusion of apparent necessity from both business and pleasure, and make it plain with sunshine plainness that there is but one thing needful—to possess God. *Youth's Companion.*

II True Repentance

The First Step. Cicero says that the words of Pericles left *stings* in the minds of his hearers. Luke says that people at Pentecost were pricked in their *heart* when they heard Peter's words. In the seventeenth verse of the fifty-first Psalm, which is a Psalm that bears the title "A Contrite Sinner's Prayer for Pardon", we read: "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise". Our word *contrite* comes from the Latin word meaning literally *crushed, bruised, ground to powder.* A mind that is stung, a heart that is pricked, or broken, or bruised, all these are figures of speech used to express the thought that some one is conscious of having done wrong. The first step in true repentance is the awakening of the conscience to the fact that one has sinned.

Other Steps. "What shall we do?" the conscience-stricken crowd asked Peter, and Peter answered, "Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

What does "repent" mean? Often we give too narrow a meaning to this word. We think of it as meaning solely being sorry for sin. In Exodus 13.17 we read that when Pharaoh at last let the people leave Egypt, God led them not by the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt. Here *repent* has another of its meanings, that of changing one's mind. True repentance always includes both sorrow for sin and change of mind and therefore course of conduct. The penitent seeks forgiveness for sin, and ceases to practice sin.

The people who asked this question of Peter had changed their minds in regard to Jesus. Before, they had thought Jesus a false Christ; now, they believed him to be the true Christ, and this belief led them to ask what they must do. In bidding them be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of their sins, Peter bade them publicly acknowledge by this rite their faith in Jesus as the Redeemer. "Repentance is a true turning unto God, whereby men, forsaking utterly their wickedness, do with a lively faith embrace, love, and give themselves to all manner of good works, which by God's word they know to be acceptable unto him. Now there are four parts of repentance: contrition, confession, faith, amendment of life."

III Modern Pentecosts

The Preparation for Pentecost. "They continued in prayer and supplication." There never has been a revival that did not have that preparation. The Reformation was rooted in prayer. The same may be said of the great Puritan Revival. The Puritan writings are quaint, unique, and yet, withal, so natural, and so spiritual, that you cannot read a Puritan book without feeling it is permeated by prayer. The writer is talking to you because he has been talking to God. He is one that lives in the secret place of the Most High, and he has come from the inner chamber to tell the world what God has told him. At the back of the Eighteenth Century Revival, too, were John Wesley, George Whitefield, and others, on their knees crying to God. *Dr. A. C. Dixon.*

Prayer Brings Power. During the great Welsh revival, it is said, a minister was marvellously successful in his preaching. He had but one sermon, but under it hundreds of men were saved. Far away from where he lived in a lonely valley, news of this wonderful success reached a brother preacher. Forthwith he became anxious to find out the secret of this success. He started out, and walked the long and weary road, and, at length, reaching the humble cottage where the good minister lived, he said, "Brother, where did you get that sermon?" He was taken into a poorly furnished room, and pointed to a spot where the carpet was worn shabby and bare, near a window that looked out towards the solemn mountains, and the minister said, "Brother, that is where I got that sermon. My heart was heavy for men. One evening I knelt there, and cried for power to preach as I had never preached before. The hours passed until midnight struck, and the stars looked down on a sleeping valley, and the silent hills; but the answer came not, so I prayed on until at length I saw a faint grey shoot up in the east; presently it became silver, and I watched and prayed until the silver became purple and gold, and on all the mountain crests blazed the altar fires of the new day; and then the sermon came, and the power came, and I lay down and slept, and arose and preached and scores fell down before the fire of God; that is where I got that sermon." *C. H. Morgan* in *Modern Knights-Errant.*

In Korea and India. Mr. Frank L. Brown, one of the General Secretaries of the World's Sunday School Association, met a native of Pyeng Yang, Korea, who had spoken to three thousand four hundred individuals, urging them to accept Christ. And he met a group of boys, sixteen to eighteen years old, from a Christian Boys' School, who had given up their Christmas holidays to hold evangelistic services in surrounding villages, with the result that over three thousand were converted. "A modern Pentecost," observes Mr. Brown, "and mere boys were the leaders."

Mr. Stanton, a missionary among the Telugu people in the region around Kurnool, India, writes about a great awakening among his people. The cause, who could tell? When the missionaries spoke the same great truths, which had sometimes seemed to fall upon dead hearts, the response now was like an in-

coming tide, and great numbers came forward and took their stand for Christ. Mr. Stanton told the people who wished to be baptized to come to Kurnool at the beginning of the new year. That would be their harvest time, and only a few of the most earnest would come, he thought. But the movement was genuine among all the people, and great crowds came. "Our little building was packed to the doors," Mr. Stanton writes. "The people could not begin to get in. After the Sunday-morning service we held a meeting to examine the candidates for baptism. It was a scene I will never forget. Under the wide-spreading branches of the great banyan-tree in the mission compound they gathered, an eager, restless throng, with a new light in their eyes and a new joy in their hearts. Village by village we called them, and were astonished at their answers. After the examination we baptized one hundred and thirty-two happy converts—the largest number ever baptized in a single day on this field. This work has gone steadily on through the year. Six new villages have come over to Christianity; and in many of the old centers of work the whole community has become Christian."

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

The people who listened to Peter's words were pricked in their hearts, they realized what it meant to crucify Jesus Christ. That is what we need to realize today, what sin is. We need to follow their example, too, in that they did not wait till the next day or some more covenient time before asking the all-important question, "What must we do?"

You shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, Peter told those new converts. And the promise is to us; we shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit for service.

Our Prayer. Father in heaven, thou art saying to our hearts, as to Peter's of old: "Be my co-workers, and help me to win this world to a redeeming knowledge of my Son and their Savior, Jesus Christ". We are saved to serve. Teach us how to work for thee.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The modern problem: why does not the Church today have greater power?
2. Modern revivals. The mission of "Billy" Sunday.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. Who wrote the Book of Romans? 2. How many letters of Paul have we? 3. What are they called? 4. How many other letters are there in the New Testament? 5. Name them. 6. What does the word *Abba* mean, and to what language does it belong? (*Guide,* ¶ 1, p. 77.) 7. What does 1 Jn. 3.1 say about our Father's love? 8. What did Jesus say about the need of suffering with him? (Mk. 8.34.) 9. What does 1 Pet. 4.13 say about being glorified in Christ? 10. How many books are there in the New Testament? 11. How many Historical Books? 12. How many Epistles? 13. By whom were the books written? 14. Which of the writers were apostles? 15. Name the books in their order. 16. Which books were first written? (See p. 23 of our Introduction.)

Questions to Think About. 1. What is the meaning of verse 14? (*Guide,* p. 76.) 2. Explain verse 15. (*Guide,* p. 76.) 3. How does the Spirit bear witness with our spirit that we are the children of God? (*Guide,* p. 77.) 4. For whom do all things work together for good? 5. Do the God-loving fare better here than the God-hating, or the God-indifferent? 6. Do those things mentioned in verses 35, 38 and 39, which we call calamities, work together for good to those that love God? 7. Does "for good" mean "for happiness"? 8. What does it mean? (*Guide,* p. 80.) 9. What preceding phrase does "to them that are called according to his purpose" define? 10. What is the meaning of "whom he foreordained to be conformed to the image of his Son"? (*Guide,* p. 77.) 11. What does Paul mean by verses 29 and 30? (*Guide,* p. 78.)

Memory and Note-Book Work. Commit to memory Romans 8.12-17, 26-28. Write Chapter III, The Witnessing of Peter at Pentecost.

LESSON IV—JANUARY 23

THE SPIRIT OF LIFE

Golden Text

As many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God. Romans 8.14

LESSON Romans 8.12-30; verses 12-17, 26-30 printed

MEMORIZE verses 16, 17

12 So, then, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh: 13 for if ye live after the flesh, ye must die; but if by the Spirit ye put to death the deeds of the body, ye shall live. 14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God. 15 For ye received not the spirit of bondage again unto fear; but ye received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. 16 The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God: 17 and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with *him*, that we may be also glorified with *him*.

26 And in like manner the Spirit also helpeth our infirmity: for we know not how to pray as we ought; but the Spirit himself maketh intercession for *us* with groanings which cannot be uttered; 27 and he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to *the will of* God. 28 And we know that to them that love God all things work together for good, *even* to them that are called according to *his* purpose. 29 For whom he foreknew, he also foreordained, *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren: 30 and whom he foreordained, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

I. The Body's Way: to be the Servant of the Spirit, 12, 13.
II. The Spirit's Way of Doing Things, 14-27.
  1. He Guides us, 14.
  2. He Gives us the Filial Spirit, 15.
  3. He Proves to us that we are Children and Heirs, 16, 17.
  4. He Intercedes for us according to the Will of God, 26, 27.
III. God's Way: His Will Controls All, 28-30.
  1. He Makes All Things Work for Good for the Righteous, 28.
  2. The Stages by which he Realizes his Purpose, 29-30.

12. *So, then, brethren.* Verses 12 and 13 are Paul's conclusion and application to his hearers of his preceding arguments. Study chapter 7 and the first eleven verses of the eighth chapter, and see the Historical Background.—*We are debtors.* We are under moral obligation. "Well, then, my brothers, we owe a duty—but it is not to the flesh! It is not to live by the flesh!" (*Dr. Moffatt's translation.*)—*To live after the flesh.* "That is, to obey the dictates of the flesh without reference to the claims of the spirit" (*Morgan*).

13. *Ye must die.* Your spiritual nature will die.—*Ye shall live.* Dust thou art, to dust returnest, was not spoken of the soul.

14. Those have a right to consider themselves sons of God who by their obedience prove the relationship. Tersely and truly does Dr. Moffatt's translation bring out the thought: "For the sons of God are those who are guided by the Spirit of God".

15. *Ye received not the spirit of bondage again unto fear.* "When you were under the law, and went about as a slave to keep the law, you feared punishment; but since you have been freed, you are like a little son who goes in with

familiarity and talks to his father, ready to do whatever the father wants him to do. There is no spirit of slavery now, but the spirit of filial obedience, delighting in the Father's presence" (*A. C. Dixon*).—*Ye received the spirit of adoption.* The practice of adopting sons was common among the Greeks and Romans, but was unknown to the Jews. "We have but a faint conception of the force with which such an illustration would speak to one familiar with the Roman practice; how it would serve to impress upon him the assurance that the adopted son of God becomes, in a peculiar and intimate sense, one with the heavenly Father" (*Merivale, quoted by Vincent.*)—*Abba, Father.* See Mk. 14. 36; Gal. 4.6. *Abba* is an Aramaic word meaning *Father.* "The whole passage tells us that the sense of Fatherhood which is in the Christian's heart and becomes his cry, comes from God's Spirit."

16. *The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.* See Jn. 1.12. "It has been said that the way to see our names as they stand written in the Book of Life is by reading the work of sanctification in our own hearts. It needs no miraculous voice from heaven, no extraordinary signs, no unusual feeling. We need only find our heart desiring Christ and hating sin—our will obedient to the Divine commands" (*Moody*).

17. *If children, then heirs.* Jewish law gave a double portion to the oldest son, but Roman law made all children, including adopted ones, share alike in the inheritance. Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God, 1 Jn. 3.1.—*Heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.* "There is no inheritance without sonship, there is no sonship without spiritual birth, there is no spiritual birth without Christ, and there is no Christ for us without faith" (*Maclaren*).—*If so be that we suffer with him.* "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me," said Jesus. Suffering, Paul perceives, is the common lot of all; as our Lord suffered, so must we suffer *with him,* but the witness of the Spirit is that through sharing in his suffering we shall come to share in his glory. Compare 1 Pet. 4.13. "Christ is 'the way'; the main features of his life must be reproduced in the lives of his people" (*Dummelow*).

26. *In like manner.* "As we groan in ourselves, so the Spirit intercedes for us with unutterable groans."—*Our infirmity.* Our ignorance in our prayer life; explained by the next clause.—*We know not how to pray as we ought.* "Not with reference to the *form* of prayer, as many say, but to the *circumstances;* in proportion to the need. Compare 2 Cor. 8.12; 1 Pet. 4.13" (*Vincent*).—With groanings which cannot be uttered. "Discontent with sin, or aspiration after holiness, may by its very intensity fail to get adequate utterance, yet in it God's own Spirit is pleading with God on our behalf. There may be acceptable and effective prayer without words. Must not all intense desire exceed its possible expression?" (*Garvie*).

27. *He that searcheth the hearts.* Man looketh on the outward appearance, but Jehovah looketh on the heart, 1 S. 16.7.—*He maketh intercession.* It is Jesus Christ.....who maketh intercession for us, Rom. 8.34.—*The saints.* The people of God.

28. *And we know.* "Paul now turns to another ground of confidence, and yet it is suggested by what immediately precedes. The Spirit intercedes 'according to the will of God', Paul therefore shows next how that will controls all events for its own ends, and what are the stages in which God realizes the purpose which he wills" (*Garvie*).—*All things work together for good.* Even those mentioned in verses 35, 38 and 39, which we call calamities. See ¶ 1, p. 82.—*Even to them that are called according to his purpose.* These words define "to them that love God". "Here Paul presents the two complimentary aspects of the ligious life. There is the human side of the relation, 'love' and the divine side, 'the call'. The Divine side in the realtion is 'the call', to which the believer responds; it is the first stage in the realization of God's purpose which falls within time. The term 'called' implies that the Divine summons has been obeyed."

29. *He also foreordained to be conformed to the image of his son.* Paul was not writing to teach men what God foreknew and foreordained. He was writing to a people who for centuries had believed that God foreordained the Jews for Heaven and the Gentiles for hell, and so he taught them the truth they needed to know, that whom God did foreknow he also did foreordain (Jews and Gentiles) *to be conformed to the image of his Son.*

30. *Justified.* "That is, his course turns towards the good, and the idea of the good and the aspiration after the good take possession of his whole nature and personality, so that he struggles with all his might towards the true end of human life and towards perfect conformity with Jesus" (*Ramsay*).—*Glorified.* "That which to us is future, is already complete in God's mind" (*Dummelow*).

The Lesson Paraphrased. Such a destiny has its obligations. To the flesh you are nothing. If you live as it would have you, you must inevitably die. But if by the help of the Spirit you sternly put an end to all license of the flesh, then in the fullest sense you will live.

Why so? Why that necessary consequence? The link is here. All who follow the leading of God's Spirit are certainly by that very fact special objects of his favor. They do indeed enjoy the highest title and the highest privileges. They are his *sons.*

When you were first baptized, and the communication of the Holy Spirit sealed your admission into the Christian fold, the energies which he imparted were surely not those of a slave. You had not once more to tremble under the lash of the Law. No: he gave you rather the proud, inspiring consciousness of men admitted into his family, adopted as his sons. And the consciousness of that relation unlocks our lips in tender filial appeal to God as our Father. Two voices are distinctly heard; one we know to be that of the Holy Spirit; the other is the voice of our own consciences, and both bear witness to the same fact that we are children of God. But to be a child implies something more. The child will one day inherit his father's possessions. So the Christian will one day enter upon that glorious inheritance which his Heavenly Father has in store for him and on which Christ as his Elder Brother has entered. Only, be it remembered, that in order to share in the glory it is necessary first to share in the sufferings which lead to it.

Nor are we alone in our struggles. The Holy Spirit supports our helplessness. Left to ourselves we do not know what prayers to offer or how to offer them. But in those inarticulate groans which rise from the depths of our being, we recognize the voice of none other than the Holy Spirit. He makes intercession, and his intercession is sure to be answered. For God who searches the inmost recesses of the heart can interpret his own Spirit's meaning. He knows that his own will regulates its petitions, and that they are offered for men dedicated to his service.

Yet another ground for confidence. The Christian knows that all things (including his sufferings) can have but one result, and that a good one, for those who love God and respond to the call which in the pursuance of his purpose he addresses to them.

Think what a long perspective of divine care and protection lies before them! First, in eternity, God marked them for his own, as special objects of his care and instruments of his purpose. Then, in the same eternity, he planned that they should share in the glorified celestial being of the Incarnate Son—in order that he, as Eldest Born, might gather round him a whole family of the redeemed. Then in due course, to those for whom he had in store this destiny he addressed the call to leave their worldly lives and devote themselves to his service. And when they obeyed that call he treated them as righteous men, with their past no longer reckoned against them. And so accounted righteous, he let them participate (partially now as they will do more completely hereafter) in his divine perfection. *Dr. William Sanday,* in *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans.*

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. Describe the occasion on which the coming of the Holy Spirit was promised to the disciples. What was the purpose of his coming? Describe the circumstances at the coming of the Spirit. What effect had the Spirit's presence upon Peter? What was the effect of Peter's sermon?

Four Lessons about the Spirit. We have had three lessons about the Holy Spirit: in the first, Christ promised the Spirit's coming that his disciples might witness for him; in the second, the Spirit came with power; in the third, Peter was empowered by the Spirit so to convince his hearers that Jesus is the Christ that three thousand believed. And now our Lesson Committee has given us Paul's words in Romans in regard to the working of the Holy Spirit in the

lives of all. The text is crowded with many other thoughts, but this is the central theme, as our outline shows.

Live as Heirs of Immortality. The Seventh Chapter and the first eleven verses of the Eighth Chapter of Romans picture dramatically the battle between the animal nature and the spiritual nature. Our lesson begins with a conclusion of the whole matter, that governed by the one, man perishes, but governed by the Spirit of God man lives eternally. Verse eleven has a favorite argument of Paul's that because Christ arose from the dead, his followers also will be raised up, and he here drives home the thought that in the presence of the Spirit in their heart they have assurance of immortality.

The Book of Romans. See pages 37-40, of our Introduction.

The Eighth Chapter. This chapter is like the Garden of Eden, which had in it all manner of delights, Spurgeon declared. "If one were shut up to preach only from the eighth chapter of Romans he would have a subject which might last a lifetime. Every line of the chapter serves for a text. It is an inexhaustible mine."

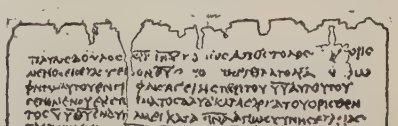
A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Ye received not the spirit of bondage again unto fear; but ye received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. We are not hirelings, doing our work of necessity, without interest and without joy. We are glad sons and daughters of the Father, joint-heirs with Christ, working to extend his kingdom. Shall we not go to our class in the spirit of Lewis McLouth, that noble teacher who as his school building came into sight on his walk to school every day repeated to himself Marcus Aurelius' words: "Lo, I am going with gladness to that work for which I was born into the world"?

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. This is a difficult lesson for young pupils, yet it has four great thoughts which they can all understand. "Mother," a little child asked, "can Jesus see you in the dark"? and then she added triumphantly, "I thought so; and so when I wakened in the dark I just smiled at him." Mr. Basil Matthews tells this beautiful remark of his little daughter and bases upon it a talk about every child having a capacity for something individual and mystical and wonderful. Do not try to teach the text to-day, but teach your pupils its four mystical, wonderful truths that God is their Father, that Jesus is their Elder Brother, that they themselves are the children of God, and that they are led by the Spirit of God. Begin by reviewing the common thought of the three lessons already studied: see the Historical Background. Then call for the Title and Golden Text.

For Older Pupils. Among the ruins of Oxyrhynchus, an ancient Greek city in Egypt, one hundred and twenty miles south of Cairo, the members of the Egyptian Exploration Fund discovered many manuscripts. Our illustration reproduces one of them, a copy of the first seven verses of the Epistle to the Romans. There are mistakes in spelling and the writing is crude, and scholars who have examined it think that it was a copy made by a schoolboy as one of his school exercises, probably in the time of Constantine, about 316 A. D., and therefore the oldest manuscript now known of any of Paul's writings. Where did Paul write this letter? When? Why?



A Reduced Facsimile of the First Seven Verses of Romans.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I The Sons of God are Those who are Guided by the Spirit of God

A Wonderful Thought. Think what it means to be a child of God! The thought is almost too wonderful to grasp. A converted heathen could not grasp it who was translating into his native tongue the words of 1 John 3.1:

Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God. He translated it thus: "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should kiss his feet." The missionary told him he had made a mistake: but the heathen answered, "O, to be called children of God, that is too much!" But, wonderful as it is, it is true, for we have received the spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

The Child of a King. A story is told of the son of Louis XVI of France, whose father and mother were put to death by the people. He was thus left an orphan, and was sent to live with a wicked man and woman who tried to teach him all manner of wrongdoing. But when they tried to persuade him to do wrong, he would refuse, and say that he was a king's son, and would some day be king himself, therefore he could not stoop so low.

I wish every boy, when he is tempted to do some unmanly thing, would remember his kingship, too. You are not the son of an earthly king, but you are each the son of a Heavenly King, and you, too, have the making of a king in you. You are too great to do mean things. There is an old hymn which runs like this:

"My Father is rich in houses and lands,
He holdeth the wealth of the world in his hands;
Of rubies and diamonds, of silver and gold
His coffers are full, he has treasures untold.
I'm the child of a King, the child of a King,
With Jesus my Savior, I'm the child of a King."

And when you would do a mean thing, ask yourself if that is worthy of your kingship. Remember also that only those who live Kingly lives are worthy to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. *Howard J. Chidley,* in *Fifty-two Story Talks.*

A Proof of Being Guided by the Spirit of God. One day in Africa a chief of one of the tribes said to Dr. Livingstone: "I wish you would change my heart. Give me medicine to change it, for it is proud, proud and angry, angry always." Dr. Livingstone lifted up a New Testament and was about to tell him of the only way in which the heart can be changed, but the chief interrupted him, "Nay, I will have it changed by medicine to drink, and changed at once, for it is always very proud and very uneasy, and continually angry with some one." Yet there is no medicine that will change the heart. But when the Spirit comes and enters the heart it is changed, and one of the evidences of the change is a new feeling toward God. For the first time we feel toward him as a Father, and call him out of our hearts with loving joy, "Our Father." *Dr. J. R. Miller,* in *Paul's Message for To-day.*

II To Them that Love God, All Things Work together for Good

To Whom and How All Things Work for Good. Let us note, first, that this cheerful outlook of St. Paul was confined to the godly and the God-loving. He believed in the eternal distinction between wrong and right, between good and evil. He believed that there was a huge mass of sin in the world, which was producing nothing but misery and death for those who continued to indulge in it. He was only sure that, for those who deliberately pursued the way of evil, there could be no peace and no fair outlook, but a fearful looking-for of judgment, while for the faithful, the righteous, and the God-loving the prospect was always bright. To them the golden future and the promises belonged. God was pledged to make all things their allies and helpers. That was St. Paul's optimism. Not that things would work in the best way for all, but for those only who set their faces Godward.

Further, when the Apostle declared that all things worked for good, he was thinking of good in God's sense of that word. Happiness is one thing, good is another and very different thing. Goodness, in the long-run, will no doubt bring in its turn perfect blessedness; it will bring unsullied and unmixed joy; but goodness is not happiness, goodness is not freedom from strife, care, and pain. If you think that all things work together to give the godly man all he desires, to deliver him from trial, trouble, worry, and distress, to make him prosperous, smiling, contented with everything about him, and unruffled in temper, person, and estate, you entirely misread these words, and you will in all probability be woefully disappointed. Those who are called after God's

purpose are called for this—to be conformed to the image of Christ. And St. Paul was thinking of this end, and of this end only, when he used the words, "All things work together for good to them that love God".

All things do work together to bring out and perfect the best in the God-loving men and women. It is not only the sorrow of the world, but the very sin of the world that disciplines and develops into goodness those who strive, and labor, and suffer with their faces uplifted towards God. It was that which made Christ—the Christ whom we know, the Christ whom we worship—the crown and flower of humanity, the altogether lovely.

And all things work together to produce the men and women who are most like him. Really there would be no high types of goodness in the world without the sin and suffering which are elements in producing them. There would be no beautiful lives, there would be no lives worth reading, were it not for the dark and evil things against which they have valiantly contended, and which they have nobly overcome. *Condensed* from *The Mind of Christ in St. Paul,* by *J. G. Greenhough.*

God's Ways are like a Hebrew Book. Luther said once: The ways of God are like a Hebrew book, which one can only read from the end. One who reads the Hebrew Bible begins Genesis at the last page and reads toward the front, for that is the way Hebrew is printed. But what did Luther mean by his figure? He meant that he who would understand God's ways with him must await the end. Only at the end will God's leading be made clear, only from that goal can he look over his whole course, and see that all has been for the best.

As a boy Lord Shaftesbury lived in a mansion where he had many luxuries. Yet his parents neglected him, leaving him wholly to the care of servants, and his boyhood was starved for love and care. This sad, lonely boyhood worked for his good, because it gave him an unbounded sympathy for all the lonely and oppressed, and when he grew to man's estate he began that philanthropic career that has made his name famous. He fought the battles of children for years single-handed against an army of men whose interests were affected by the reforms he was determined to introduce. He finally triumphed, and surveying his life as a whole we see that God's plan for him in childhood was best.

In the light of his career and that of countless others whose whole life we know, let us pray James Whitcomb Riley's words:

> Make us to meet what is or is to be
> With fervid welcome, knowing it is sent
> To serve us in some way full excellent,
> Though we discern it all belatedly.

A Victory of Faith. A Chinese lad, Tsai Ting Kan, was sent over here to be educated. He was graduated at the head of his class from the High School of New Britain, Conn., and returned to China to enter the naval service. During the war with Japan he was imprisoned in a Buddhist temple, and there continued his study of the Bible and became a zealous Christian. Later, he identified himself with the rising reform party, and a price was put on his head by the Empress Dowager, but he escaped. Then came the blow that staggered his faith. He lost his wife and two children by the plague, and said he could no longer believe in so cruel a God. He cut himself adrift from all his Christian friends. Then one day in 1911 Mr. Loomis, who had befriended him when in prison, heard the name of Tsai Ting Kan mentioned as the confidential adviser of President Yuen Shih Kai. Learning that it was the man whom he had known as Captain Tsai, Mr. Loomis wrote to him. In answer, Tsai explained his silence and spiritual struggles. "The death of my wife and two sons," he wrote, "broke my faith, and I determined never to write again to tell you. Often I took up my pen, but the mental struggle always ended with the resolution not to break your heart by confessing my denial of God. Forgive me these years of cruel silence....Religion is a moral exercise and education of the soul. It is a force for the upbuilding of character. It does not necessarily bring with it human happiness; it only enables us to bear with fortitude the trials of life. It was wrong to expect that religion could make us truly happy in the earthly sense, or that God would exempt us from the physical laws of nature through our prayers. God does not bribe us into belief by promises to bless. Years of

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brooding thought and bitter trial have indelibly burned these convictions into my mind."

III Foreknowledge and Predestination

What Paul Means. Milton, in "Paradise Lost," represents the angels in heaven engaged in lofty talk about the mysteries of God's foreknowledge, and man's free-will and predestination and effectual calling. These were just the topics to which the religious minds of Milton's time were continually drawn, and he thought that the things which interested mortals would have a supreme attraction for angelic minds. That world of speculation is not our world at all. We have left it behind. Moreover, we are decidedly shy of such texts as this, because they were once made the battle-ground of hostile creeds, and wrangled over by Calvinist and Arminian until all the sweet life-blood was let out of them, and their true meaning hidden in the blinding dust which the strife stirred up. Yet surely St. Paul had a noble thought in the words if we could only read it with fresh, unbiased minds, and deliver it from all the hard and unlovely misconceptions with which it has been loaded.

"For whom he foreknew, he also did predestinate." It was an awful doctrine which our fathers found in these words: that a privileged few were foreordained from all eternity to enjoy the favor of God and the raptures of heaven for ever, and that all the rest, the vast majority, were created and sent into the world with their terrible destiny fixed by unchangeable decree, pre-doomed to reprobation and everlasting pains. It seems inconceivable to us that such a thought of God could be held, as it was, by good and tender-hearted men who had sat at the feet of Jesus, and seen the pity and love-light in his eyes.

But what the great apostle had in mind was something vastly different from that. He declares here that God, from the first, had a vision of a nobler race of men, who would be sons of God indeed, who would be chosen and called to share the mind of Christ and be his witnesses among men. God, who foresaw and predestined the Incarnation, the gift of his well-beloved Son to the world, and that life of spotless purity and matchless sorrow, foresaw and predestined also that there should gather round this Christ men after his own heart, swayed with the same purpose, and that he, the great Forerunner, should be as the Firstborn among many brethren. That was what God foreknew and determined long before it came to pass—that there would be loyal and obedient hearts who would yield to the charms of Jesus, and take up the cross with him, and follow him in the service of self-forgetting faith, and in the service of humanity. God foreknew them, and when the time came he called them out, and endowed them with the Spirit of the Master, and sealed and equipped them for their appointed work. That is St. Paul's idea of election, and the divine idea of election which runs through all the sacred writings. *J. G. Greenhough,* in *"The Mind of Christ in St. Paul."*

Am I Foreordained to be Conformed to the Image of his Son? What I may become depends in the last analysis upon what is the power within me—the power which by my free acceptance I take, and so cause to be within me. If I were not a free moral agent, it would be impossible for me to ask this question; but I am a free moral agent. The seed does not ask, "Shall I become a rose or a pear?" because the seed will become whatever the soil and the sunshine and its original nature make it. But just because I am a free moral agent I must work with God, and what I become, whether rose or thistle, depends—I say it reverently—as truly on myself as on him. I am not a flute, out of which he can draw what music he likes; I am not plastic clay which he fashions into what he likes; I am not a movable type which he puts where he likes. There is in me a power, and that power must co-operate with him, or there will be no music in my life, no divine figure wrought, no divine truth printed. *Dr. Lyman Abbott,* in *The Evolution of Christianity.*

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

As many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God. Are we led by the Spirit of God, is it our purpose to live in harmony with his will? Then the Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. We have not received the spirit of bondage, but the spirit of adoption,

whereby we cry, Abba, Father. "It makes a great difference to God, and to the man, and to the work he does, whether one goes to his work like a hireling and slave, or like a son who is one in purpose with the Father, and part owner in all the results of the toil." And we are foreordained to be conformed to the image of his Son. Are we growing daily more like unto him?

To them that love God all things work together for good. "Our Lord God is like a printer, who sets the letters backward," said Martin Luther; "we see and feel him set the types, but here we cannot read them. When we are printed off, yonder in the life to come, we shall read all clear and straightforward."

Our Prayer. O thou, who art our Father, we come to thee in childlike confidence, knowing that we can tell thee all things and thou wilt listen, and can ask of thee all things and thou wilt grant all that are for our best good. Give us always the spirit of filial obedience, that we may delight to do whatever is thy will for us, thy children. Give us the wide view, which sees life as a whole, and the filial trust in thy loving care by which we realize that all things are working together for our good, even though now we do not understand how this may be. Lead us ever by thy Spirit that we may not live unworthy of the glorious privileges of our adoption as thy sons, heirs of thine and joint-heirs with Christ.

TOPICS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The Epistle to the Romans. See pp. 37-40.
2. Foreknowledge and Predestination. See the Third Topic.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. What were the hours for prayer fixed by Ex. 29.41? 2. What was Jesus' habit of prayer? (Mk. 1.35; Lk. 6.12; 22.39, 41.) 3. What is the custom in regard to beggars in the East today? (*Guide*, p. 85.) 4. What did Jesus tell the disciples about the poor in Jn. 12.8? 5. On what special occasions had Peter and John been associated? (Lk. 5.1-11; Jn. 13.23, 24; 18.15, 16; 21.7.) 6. How old was the lame man? (Acts 4.22.) 7. Where were the Beautiful Gate and Solomon's Porch. (*Guide*, p. 86.) 8. On what occasion did Jesus teach the disciples, especially Judas, the value of something that could not be purchased with money? (Mk. 14.3-9.) 9. What explanation of the wonderful cure did Peter give the multitude? (Verse 16.) 10. On what occasion did the disciples attempt a miracle and fail, and to what did Jesus ascribe their failure? (Mk. 9.15-29.) 11. To what results did Peter's healing of the lame man lead? 12. What did Peter say in his sermon to the amazed crowd? 13. Tell the story of Jesus and the man who could not walk. (Jn. 5.1-9.)

Questions to Think About. 1. Who built the first temple? 2. What great prayer did he offer at its dedication? (One of last year's lessons.) 3. Why did Peter bid the lame man look on him? 4. What did Peter mean by bidding the man walk "in the name of Jesus Christ"? 5. Why did the man hold Peter and John? 6. What two people witnessed for Jesus in this event? 7. Whose words did many of the onlookers believe because of whose witness? 8. In Acts 2.43 it is said that the Apostles did "many wonders and signs": why is this special miracle recorded rather than others? (Because it led directly to the persecution of the Church.) 9. Which would you rather have, health or wealth? 10. If we have no money to give the suffering, what can we do for them? 11. What is better than giving alms to beggars at the door? 12. What great modern relief work is the result of Christianity? 13. What is your class doing for the unfortunate?

Memory and Note-Book Work. Memorize Phœbe Cary's stanza on p. 88, or Dixie Wolcott's on p. 88. In a Second Note-Book entitled Epistles of Paul begin an account of The Epistle to the Romans. To-day write what you have learned in regard to whom it was written, and the occasion for its writing. See pp. 37, 38 of our Introduction. This is a difficult Epistle, and it can be studied in part, as we have two other lessons from it. Have a third Note-Book entitled Lessons from Paul's words. Write what Paul said in his letter to the Romans about "The Spirit of Life".

LESSON V—JANUARY 30

THE LAME MAN LEAPING

Golden Text

Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but what I have, that give I thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk. Acts 3.6.

LESSON Acts 3: verses 1-12 printed

MEMORIZE verses 9, 10

1 Now Peter and John were going up into the temple at the hour of prayer, *being* the ninth hour. 2 And a certain man that was lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the door of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple; 3 who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked to receive an alms. 4 And Peter, fastening his eyes upon him, with John, said, Look on us. 5 And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something from them. 6 But Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but what I have, that give I thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk. 7 And he took him by the right hand, and raised him up: and immediately his feet and his ankle-bones received strength. 8 And leaping up, he stood, and began to walk: and he entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God. 9 And all the people saw him walking and praising God: 10 and they took knowledge of him, that it was he that sat for alms at the Beautiful gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him.

11 And as he held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon's, greatly wondering. 12 And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this man? or why fasten ye your eyes on us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made him to walk?

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

I. Peter and John Going to the Temple, 1.
II. The Lame Man Begging, 2-3.
III. The Lame Man Cured, 4-8.
IV. The Amazement of the People, 9-11.
V. Peter's Discourse, 12-26.

1. *Peter and John.* John is mentioned in the Acts only here and in 8.14.—*The ninth hour.* Three p. m. Nine in the morning and three in the afternoon were the hours fixed by law (Ex. 29.41) for sacrifice and prayer; devout Jews of New Testament times kept also the noon hour for prayer.

2. *A certain man.* He was now forty years old, Acts 4.22.—*Was carried.* Was being carried to his accustomed place as Peter and John were entering the Temple.—*Whom they laid daily at the door.* Therefore all the people knew him well. "He was part of their city landscape. They knew him as they knew the carved columns of the temple doorway."—*The door of the temple which is called Beautiful.* See the Geographical Background.—*Alms.* A gift of charity.

4, 5. *Look on us.* The man was accustomed to sit there begging and did not expect to receive something from every worshipper. Peter would rivet the man's attention upon himself and arouse his expectation. He attained his purpose, verse 5.

6. *Silver and gold have I none.* Silver and gold coins.—*In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth.* In the power of Jesus Christ. Compare Jesus' words, *I* say unto thee, arise, Mk. 5.41; Lk. 7.14. Jesus had promised that his disciples should do wonderful works in his name, Mk. 16.17.—*Walk.* "Was this some new-discovered quality and power in themselves?" Phillips Brooks questions,

and then he thinks of them as saying to themselves: "This is come to us since we had to do with Jesus. It is since we were his disciples that this new power began to stir within us." And then they must have said: "It is the same which stirred in him. Do you not remember how we used to see the same in his face which now is in ourselves? He, too, was full of pity, and loved life, and counted the loss or the defeat of life a woe, and tried to give of his own life to others." And then they came back to themselves and all was clear. All this was in them because they belonged to him. It was in them because it was in him. This desire and power to heal was his, not theirs. He was the spring and fountain out of which the divine water flowed. They were only the channels down which it flowed to its result.

7. *He took him by the right hand and raised him up.* "There are men who have ceased to believe in the Bible and in all existing religious organizations, but no one has yet been found who does not believe in a strong and uplifting hand. We shall have a new book of the Acts when the Church goes back to the Gate Beautiful and gets a fresh glimpse of the gospel as preached by the apostolic band" (*C. E. Jefferson*).—*Immediately.* This word is one of Luke's favorites; it occurs often in his Gospel.—*Ankle-bones.* "The Greek words here are those that a doctor would use in describing a patient, and make one of those minute coincidences which go to prove that Luke the physician was the author of the Acts."

11. *He held Peter and John.* Perhaps because he was excited, as has been suggested, but more probably because, like the demoniac whom Jesus freed (Mk. 5.18) he would not part from them.—*In the porch that is called Solomon's.* See p. 87.

12. *It.* The wonderment of the people.—*Answered.* This word is often used in the New Testament where no question has been asked, the answer being to the evident thought of the listeners.—*As though by our own power or godliness we had made him to walk.* "God's work can only be done in and by God's strength; therefore, work done well will not be our work, but God working in us" (*Andrew Murray*).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

1. *At the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour.* The Babylonians divided the day into twelve hours, and the Greeks adopted their method. It is supposed that the Jews during their captivity also learned from the Babylonians this method of computing time. Hours are first mentioned in the Scriptures in the Book of Daniel. The daylight between sunrise and sunset was divided into twelve equal parts, and of course the length of each part, or hour, unlike ours, which are always of the same length, varied according to the season, being much longer in the summer than in the winter. We must remember that in those days there were no clocks to measure time. Whether the Jews used sundials, or water clocks, or some other contrivance we do not know.

Dr. Abbott reminds us that the maintenance of special hours of prayer, borrowed from the Jews, was continued in the Christian church and increased to seven daily occasions, and that these are still observed, in theory if not in practice, by the Romish clergy. The literal observance of the entire prescribed service would occupy nearly the entire twenty-four hours.

2. *A certain man was carried, whom they laid daily at the door of the temple to ask alms of them that entered into the temple.* Visitors to Palestine will have no difficulty in visualizing this scene. The lame and the blind, the poor and the diseased, are sitting around every church door soliciting alms. The blind are led and the lame are sometimes literally "carried" on the shoulders of some obliging friend to their accustomed places. It is believed that those who come from the house of prayer will be most charitable. Whether they are impostors or not, few pass them by without giving them a copper piece worth about half a cent. On Friday afternoons the steps leading down to the Jews Wailing Place at Jerusalem are so occupied by beggars of all sorts and description that one makes his way through them with difficulty. I saw many Jews giving out slips of paper, and learned that they were too poor themselves to afford a gift of half a cent, and twelve of these pieces of paper were obtainable from the priests for one cent. Palestine, like all other countries of this period, had no homes for the poor and the afflicted, no hospitals or asylums.

3. *An alms.* The prophet Daniel, after interpreting Nebuchadnezzar's dream as meaning that he should be driven from men, to dwell with the beasts of the field, urges him to break off his sins by righteousness, and his iniquities by showing mercy to the poor. Alms-giving came to be regarded among the Jews as a great act of piety, even an act that would help blot out sins. The Pharisees were especially ostentatious in their giving of alms (Mt. 6.2).

8. *Praising God.* This may indicate that the man was truly devout, but orientals are wont to ascribe all remarkable events, whether good or ill, directly to God.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. How long a time elapsed between the Ascension and Pentecost? What unusual events occurred at Pentecost? What was the great meaning of Pentecost? What was the subject of Peter's sermon? How many believed in Jesus Christ at that time? How many followers had he at his death? How did his followers live after Pentecost?

After Pentecost. Some months have probably passed—how many we do not know—since the events of Pentecost. The large company who on that day professed repentance for sin and faith in Jesus Christ have lived in close and sympathetic fellowship one with another, those having possessions voluntarily sharing them with those having none, and continually rejoicing and praising God. Day by day their numbers have increased.

At this stage of the history the apostles had no thought of ever breaking away from Judaism. They observed all the Jewish rites and ceremonies. Peter and John were going to the temple for prayer at the regular afternoon hour, when the remarkable cure of the lame man was wrought, which is the subject of our lesson. Many wonders were wrought by the apostles; this one Luke narrates because of its far-reaching effects, for the cure and Peter's sermon that followed aroused the first opposition of the Jewish authorities.

Peter's Sermon. When the people saw the lame man walking and leaping they gathered around him and the apostles in Solomon's Porch, in great amazement. Peter quickly disclaimed all power of his own in the miracle and seized the opportunity to preach to the throng. It was faith in Jesus Christ, he told them, that had made this man strong and sound; this Christ whom the God of their fathers had glorified by proving his power in this "sign"; whom they had delivered up to Pilate; the Holy and Righteous One whom they had refused to have freed as Pilate himself wished, but had demanded in his stead a murderer; the Prince of Life, whom they had killed but whom God had raised from the dead, as his disciples could testify.

Boldly Peter thus accused the people of being guilty as well as their rulers; but, he added, they had been ignorant. God had fulfilled his will, that Christ should suffer, even as their prophets had foreshadowed it. Therefore let them repent of their guilt and turn to Jesus Christ, that their sins might be blotted out, and the Messianic Kingdom might be realized, as all the prophets had foretold. He appealed to them to believe the prophets and to accept the covenant of blessing first made to Abraham, of whom they were sons and heirs, now fulfilled by God in raising up Jesus Christ his Servant from the dead, who was able to turn them from their sins.

"A greater miracle than the cure of the lame man is this sermon of Peter's," says Dr. Parker, "Such a man *must* succeed in his ministry or be killed".

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The scene of the lesson is the temple enclosure at Jerusalem. The word *temple,* you remember, was applied to the whole enclosure with its various courts which rose terrace upon terrace—first the Court of the Gentiles, next the Court of the Women, then the Court of the Israelites, and lastly the Court of the Priests within which was the sanctuary itself. The Court of the Women (so called because women as well as men might enter) was the usual place for the worshippers, and it was always thronged at the hours of prayer.

The location of the Beautiful Gate is not definitely known. Some scholars think that it led from the city into the first Court. The majority believe it to have been the gate facing the Mount of Olives, between the Court of the Gen-

tiles and the Court of the Women, called the Gate of Nicanor. It was of beautiful Corinthian brass.

Probably Peter and John and the man who had been lame entered the Court of the Women and engaged in worship, and then came back together into the outer Court, or Court of the Gentiles. Around the inside of the outer walls of this Court were porches, open only toward the Court. They were paved with marble and their flat roofs of cedar were supported by marble columns. Solomon's Porch was on the east and was six hundred feet long by seventy-five feet wide. It was called "Solomon's", not because it was the very one erected by Solomon, but because it was built on the great wall which Solomon had raised from the valley below, and retained the name of the porch which it replaced. Its double row of Corinthian pillars were supposed to have survived from Solomon's temple.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Peter fastened his eyes upon the lame man and said, "Look on us". Then the man gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something from them. The man was sitting there at the door of the temple as listlessly as many a Sunday-school scholar sits before his teacher; he was expecting nothing from Peter and John and only held out his hand for alms because that was his custom. He was quite used to not receiving anything from passers-by: some scholars are listless because they have grown accustomed to the prospect of not receiving anything worth while from the lesson teaching. Peter secured that listless man's attention at once and changed him into an alert, eager, expectant man. Listless scholars may be similarly changed by their teachers.

What gifts have you for your pupils that are far more valuable than money? What wealth of mind and heart, of knowledge and insight, of interest and love, have you in store for them? "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk", was the way in which Peter gave his great gift to the lame man; he meant that the healing power was his only as Jesus Christ gave it to him. So Jesus Christ gives you great gifts, and the purpose of his giving is that you may be prodigal in their use for others.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. In Mohammedan countries in the East there is an official called the Muezzin whose duty it is to call out the hours of prayer from the mosque. During the day and night he utters his chant from the balcony of the minaret: "Allah is most great. There is no God but Allah. Mohammed is the apostle of Allah. Come to prayer." At the sound of his voice the devout followers of Mohammed drop their work and engage in prayer. Two calls to prayer are chanted during the night; at the first morning call the Muezzin adds that "Prayer is better than sleep."

The Jews had their regular hours of prayer when they went up to the temple to worship. As long as the temple stood, probably, followers of Jesus continued to take part in the services there. One day after Pentecost Peter and John were going to the temple at one of the hours of prayer. What hour was it?

For Older Pupils. In the operating-room of a Chinese mission hospital this prayer hangs on the wall: "All-powerful Lord of Heaven! This, thy child, who is before thee, is sick. We, thy servants, ask thee for skilful hands and for wisdom to relieve his pain and cure his body, in order that some day he may understand the love and mercy of his Heavenly Father and return thanks to thee and come to serve thee. We ask it all in the name of Jesus Christ the Savior. Amen!" Peter might have offered this very prayer as he looked down that day upon that man sitting at the temple gate.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Priceless Gifts

What Peter Did for the Lame Man. Through the cities and villages the apostles went as poor men, and yet they could make many rich; as possessing nothing, and yet they had a power which kings might envy them. They had

nothing, and yet they had something: "What I have I give thee," said Peter to the lame beggar, as he bade him in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth walk. The real marvel of the story lies not in the fact that for a few years the lame man had the use of his feet, but in the fact that he was led to believe in the living Savior (verse 16), and thereby became whole in body and soul. His bodily strength and vigor did not remain always, there came a time when his feet refused to carry him, but because of his faith in the Redeemer he could continue to praise God in the temple not made with hands.

When the beggar realized that strength had actually come to his limbs and he could walk like other men, he entered the temple, "walking and leaping and praising God." How infinitely small the coin looked to him then, which he had hoped to receive from Peter, and how marvelously great the gift that had been given him!

Gifts more Valuable than Silver and Gold. Very familiar is the story told by Turgenieff in one of his parables of his gift to a beggar who held out his hands for alms. Turgenieff searched his pockets and then said to the man, "I am sorry, brother, I have nothing for thee". But joy came into the beggar's face. "That is enough," he said, "You have given me more than money, for you have called me brother." The gifts whose value can not be estimated in dollars and cents are the ones which the world could not get along without—gifts of smiles and of sympathy, of encouragement and of love.

"Lincoln has nothing, only plenty of friends", they said when he was nominated for the presidency. He was poor in silver, so poor that he had to borrow money in order to move his family to Washington, but how very rich he was in his friends!

"I have no time to make money," said Professor Agassiz, and he was right, his time was more valuable to the world than any number of millions which he might have accumulated and given away.

The Rarest Gifts.

"No lands nor gold do I hold in fee;
Naught can I give the world," said he.
But many a heart as he passed along
Was cheered by the lilt of his merry song;
While hapless wanderers gone astray,
Were guided back to the better way;
And eyes that were dimmed with tears the while
Would flash once more in an answering smile.
"The rarest gifts to be given away
Are neither lands nor gold," said they.

Dixie Wolcott, in Lippincott's.

Alexander Duff's Gift. In his home church before he went to India, Alexander Duff exclaimed: "There was a time when I had no care or concern for the heathen; that was a time when I had no care or concern for my own soul. When by the grace of God I was led to care for my own soul, then it was I began to care for the heathen abroad. In my closet, on my bended knees, I then said to God: 'O Lord, thou knowest that silver and gold to give to this cause I have none, what I have I give unto thee—I offer thee myself; wilt thou accept the gift'?"

If Love be in the Heart.

One smile can glorify a day,
One word new hope impart;
The least disciple need not say
There are no alms to give away
If love be in the heart.

Phoebe Cary.

Priceless Things. That little, pale-faced mite who stopped you in the street yesterday as you were carrying home a bunch of flowers to your wife and said "Give me a flower", was not a beggar. She was an artist. It was her response to the vision beautiful, her plea for the priceless. It was a voice confessing amid the rattle of the street that "man doth not live by bread alone".

Judas stood among the priceless things that day in Simon's house, and the plea for them was stifled in his soul. Only a shallow and unspiritual judg-

ment will think less of him for knowing the selling-price of alabaster and nard. His sin lay in that he had lost the power to see in these things a sacrament of "the life that is life indeed". He was heart-blind. The fact that he priced the gift proves that he never saw it. To have seen it was to have known it was priceless.

O these priceless things—how we miss them! How Jesus pleaded for them! And Judas had companied with that unworldly life, had heard the Master say that Solomon in his state robes was not so well dressed as a wild flower, and that the widow's half-farthing was worth more than the jewels of the rich, and that the cup of cold water was worthy a heavenly reward; had heard the rich promises of the kingdom pledged to the poor of the earth: and yet he had not learned that there are things too beautiful to be sold. All the best things are given away. Do we realize what a ghost and travesty of possession lurks in the act of purchase? You can buy a book of poems. The soft bindings are yours, the gilt edges are yours, the handmade paper is yours, but not the poetry. No man was ever rich enough to buy a poem. If it is his, he must have it as the unpurchasable gift of God to his soul. And as surely as you cannot buy a poem so you cannot buy a home, or a happy hour, or a good conscience, or a rich hope. Trite old story, yes, but we must go on telling it till the vital truth it implies has fashioned the practices of the world. *Condensed from The Pilgrim Church,* by *Percy C. Ainsworth.*

II Medical Missions

Modern Miracles. "Miracles are bells to call the people to Christ." The curing of the lame man brought a great crowd around Peter and John in Solomon's Porch, and gave Peter opportunity to tell them about Jesus. The result was, we are told in the fourth verse of the next chapter, that "many of them that heard the word believed, and the number of the men came to be about five thousand".

Medical missionaries of to-day can not perform miracles and heal instantaneously. The slow processes of the scientific method have supplanted the swiftness of such a cure as our lesson narrates, but they perform many gradual cures that seem no less than miracles to the people. "Medicine has been the magic key which has opened every door of fanaticism, bigotry and opposition," a missionary in Persia writes in the *Missionary Review of the World.* "They have seen the lame carried into our hospitals and go out walking. They have seen the blind led in and go out seeing. When native physicians were fleeing in terror from the cholera-stricken cities they have seen us organizing relief work, dispensing medicines, and opening emergency hospitals to fight the scourge. They have come to believe in the missionaries as men who are in Persia not for any selfish reasons, but who are the sincere seekers of the welfare of Persia and sincere servants of God."

Peter's disclaimer of any power in himself, his ascription of the cure to Jesus Christ, is recalled by these words overhead by a medical missionary at Tyre. A group of harvesters were returning from the fields and this is what one of them was saying: "It is because their Christ tells them to do this, it is because he teaches them to do it that they do it; it is he that tells them to nurse the sick, and give medicine, to do as they have done this winter and still are doing, to feed the hungry."

The Growth of Medical Missions. Human suffering makes the whole world kin, and every part of the globe is eager now to have the western arts of medicine and surgery. The grandest humanitarian feature of Christian missions is the medical phase. Its great success has stimulated governments to follow the example of the humble preachers of the Gospel.

The first medical mission is said to have been conducted by a Dutch physician in the East Indies from 1624 to 1638. The growth of the movement was very slow, and it was not till the latter part of the nineteenth century that it became important. Livingstone's many years of gentle ministration to the sick, and Arnot's journey on behalf of tropical Africa with nothing to pay his way excepting his box of medicines, did much to call attention to the value of medical practice as a beneficent feature of missionary service. For thirty years this new phase of the work has grown by leaps and bounds till it is found in

every corner of the earth covered by the mission field. *Cyrus C. Adams* in *Review of Reviews.*

III Relief Work

What the Beautiful Gate Means for us. As Peter and John went up, in the ordinary practice of life's duty, to the temple at the hour of prayer, there came to them an opportunity for service. Not only to the afflicted one on whose life their healing power fell did their influence extend; indirectly it touched many others who, realizing what had taken place and astonished by it, received from the apostle's lips a message explaining the secret of their power.

The Beautiful Gate means, for us, the hour of opportunity that lies close to the hour of prayer. What do I mean by that? I mean that those who enter into this experience of prayer will find lying all along the pathway of life occasions for service and powers for service which but for their experience in prayer they would neither have seen nor have been able to use. I believe that prayer not only keeps alive in us but keeps in working power influences which do not continue unless we continue in prayer. The discontinuance of prayer means to rob life of power. *Charles Cuthbert Hall,* in *Association Monthly.*

For Crippled Soldiers. At the beginning of this great European War the question of what is to become of the multitudes of crippled soldiers was discussed in all the warring nations. France at once laid plans for establishing an industrial school at Lyons where the maimed men can learn a trade and become self-reliant. It is to be modelled after one at Charleroi, Belgium. Several departments are to be maintained: shoe-making, book-binding, harness-making, tailoring, basketry, weaving and book-keeping.

The Inspirer of Relief Work. It is Jesus Christ who has filled men's hearts with the emotions of sympathy, pity and love, which have sent them forth to engage in service. The story of John Howard and his tireless labor for prison reform is part of the story of Christ. The story of William Wilberforce and his splendid struggle for the freedom of the slave is part of the story of Christ. The story of John Pounds and his work among the ragged lads of Portsmouth is part of the story of Christ. The story of Florence Nightingale and her unwearied ministrations to the sick and wounded in the Crimea is part of the story of Christ. The story of Lord Shaftesbury and his life-long devotion to the cause of the children and the poor and the oppressed is part of the story of Christ. The story of Father Damien's work among the lepers of Molokai, and of Sister Dora among the rough men and women of the Black Country, and of Salvation sisters among the degraded and the vile in our city slums, is part of the story of Christ. The story of Müller's Orphanage and Barnado's Homes and the Victoria Hospital is part of the story of Christ. Yes, the story of every refuge and asylum and home would have to find a place in the "complete biography"—for they are all *Gesta Christi,* the doings of Christ. *Dr. J. D. Jones* in *St. Paul's Certainties and Other Sermons.*

Buying a Miracle.—A little girl heard the doctor say of her sick sister, "Nothing but a miracle can save her". Taking her pennies, she went from shop to shop saying, "Please, I want to buy a miracle". A great doctor heard and asked what she wanted. When he understood he hurried home with her, and, after examining the sick girl, said: "It is true, only a miracle can save her, and it must be performed at once". He sent for his instruments, performed the operation, and the girl's life was saved.

Graded Social Service for the Sunday School. In the *Biblical World* for August, 1914, (since published in a small book), Mr. William Norman Hutchins has a very helpful article with this title. "When social service in the Sunday school is looked upon as something altogether novel, it is owing to the mistake of identifying it with the distribution of charity", he writes. "But its function is far more significant, worthful, and urgent than a mere participation in philanthropic endeavor. The purpose of social service in the Sunday-schools is to socialize the young people, to develop their powers of sympathetic imagination and friendly co-operation; and this it does by promoting, enriching, vitalizing, genuine personal relations with other groups."

The last chapter contains a "suggested Curriculum of Social Service". (See the article or the book for suggestions for your class.)

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

There was always a place in the lives of the apostles for communion with God. Prayer had an "hour", a definite time and place in their program of living. Their Master always had his hours of prayer. Have we?

He is the poor man indeed who must say, Silver and gold have I only.

We pity the man who is lame, but we need one and all to follow the counsel of our poet Lowell who bids us

> Look inward through the depths of thine own soul,
> How is it with thee? Art thou sound and whole?

When the lame man found himself able to walk, he went about praising God. Do we always acknowledge even in our hearts the great blessings we have received from God?

Our Prayer. Like the lame beggar at the Beautiful Gate asking for alms, needy ones all over the world are asking for bread. Our silver and gold we hold as thy stewards, Heavenly Father; guide us in our giving. Make us responsive to the unspoken appeals. Grant us power to give that for which we are not asked, the more valuable gifts of encouragement in struggle, sympathy in distress, kindness and good cheer in all times, and above all, the assurance of thy love and power. We who have more of sunshine than of shadow, more of sufficiency than of want, more of ease than of pain, more to be thankful for than to bewail, we are in danger of forgetting our great debt of gratitude to thee, most bountiful and all-loving Father. We praise and glorify thee for these our great blessings, and for the greatest of thy gifts, the coming of thy Son Jesus Christ to save us from our sins.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Christ's standard of values. See chapter VII of "Christianity and Social Problems", by Dr. Lyman Abbott.

2. What social service can our class and Sunday-school do? See "Graded Social Service for the Sunday-School" by William Norman Hutchins, one of the series on "Principles and Methods of Religious Education", obtainable from your denominational publishing house. See p. 90.

3. Religion and philanthropy. See *The Outlook,* Aug. 9, 1913, p. 809.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. How many believers were there at this time? (Acts 4.4) 2. Who were "ye rulers of the people" whom Peter addressed? (Acts 4.1-7.) 3. Describe the Sanhedrin and its arrangement at a trial. (*Guide,* p. 94.) 4. What promise had Jesus made to the disciples in regard to their needing not to be anxious, when arrested, as to what they should say? 5. Where in the Old Testament is the quotation of verse 11 found? (See the Concordance of your Bible under the word *Stone,* or the marginal reference to verse 11 in your Bible.) 6. Where in the Gospels is it quoted? 7. How were stones inspected and marked at the quarries at this time? (*Guide,* p. 94.) 8. With Peter's present boldness of speech compare Mt. 26.69-75. 9. To what is his fearlessness now ascribed? (Verses 8, 13.) 10. How did Daniel show that he feared God and not men? (Daniel 1.1-21.) 11. How had the Sanhedrin silenced the parents of the blind man to whom Jesus gave sight? (Jn. 9.22) 12. How had some of the rulers been silenced? (Jn. 12.42) 13. Where did Peter and John go after they were discharged and what did they do? (Acts 4.23-31.)

Questions to Think About. 1. Why were Peter and John arrested? 2. Why did the rulers object to the healing of the lame man? 3. What led Peter to suggest that they were examined concerning a good deed? 4. What was Peter's explanation of the healing? 5. What does verse 11 mean? 6. What characteristic of Peter was it that led the rulers to recall his association with Jesus? 7. Of what only were Peter and John afraid? 8. Why were the rulers in a quandary as to what to do in the matter? 9. What were the things which the apostles saw and heard, verse 20?

Memory and Note-Book Work. Memorize Acts 4.11 and 12. Write Chapter IV, the Witnessing of Peter in the Cure of the Lame Man.

THE BOLDNESS OF PETER AND JOHN

Golden Text

Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong. 1 Corinthians 16.13

LESSON Acts 4.1-31: verses 8-21 printed. MEMORIZE verses 12, 13

8 Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said unto them, Ye rulers of the people, and elders, 9 if we this day are examined concerning a good deed done to an impotent man, by what means this man is made whole; 10 be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, *even* in him doth this man stand here before you whole. 11 He is the stone which was set at naught of you the builders, which was made the head of the corner. 12 And in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved.

13 Now when they beheld the boldness of Peter and John, and had perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled: and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus. 14 And seeing the man that was healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it. 15 But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, 16 saying, What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been wrought through them, is manifest to all that dwell in Jerusalem; and we cannot deny it. 17 But that it spread no further among the people, let us threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name. 18 And they called them, and charged them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. 19 But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it is right in the sight of God to hearken unto you rather than unto God, judge ye: 20 for we cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard. 21 And they, when they had further threatened them, let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them, because of the people; for all men glorified God for that which was done.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

I. The Arrest of Peter and John, 1-3.
II. The Number of Believers, 4.
III. Peter and John before the Sanhedrin, 5-12.
  1. The Assembling of the Sanhedrin and their Question, 5-7.
  2. Peter's Fearless Reply, 8-12.
    a. The Cure of the Lame Man Wrought through the Power of Jesus Christ, 8-10.
    b. They were Guilty of Christ's Death, 10-11.
    c. In His Name Alone is Salvation, 12.
  3. Quandary of Sanhedrin, 13-17.
  4. Peter and John Threatened and Discharged, 18-22.
IV. The Disciples Unite in Praise and Prayer, 23-31.

8. *Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit.* "That is the explanation of the boldness: it is Peter plus the Infinite! The word *filled* is a picturesque word. It was the word that was used when the net was crammed with fishes. It was the word used when a substance had been steeped and soaked in the dye, and every strand and thread in the fabric had received the requisite hue. They were filled with the Spirit like a crammed net: every tissue and fibre in mind and heart and soul was steeped in the Spirit, and dyed into one all-pervasive and heavenly hue" (*Jowett*). Recall the promises made by Jesus to the disciples, Lk. 12.11, 12; 21.14, 15; Mk. 13.11.—*Ye rulers of the people.* Rulers and elders and scribes, Annas and Caiaphas, the high priest, verses 5 and 6, the

members of the Sanhedrin, the highest council of the Jews. The "rulers" were the chief priests; the elders, the representatives of the people; the scribes, the professional expounders of the law. Most of the scribes were Pharisees.

9. *If we this day are examined concerning a good deed.* See verses 1-7, and compare Jesus' question in Jn. 10.32.—*Impotent.* Feeble, Infirm.—*This man.* The lame man of our last lesson.—*Whole.* Sound in body. Our words *whole, hale,* and *health* all come from the same Anglo-Saxon word *hal.*

10. *Whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead.* Emphasize here the words *ye* and *God.* The reason for their arrest lay in the fact that the rulers were "sore troubled because they taught the people, and proclaimed in Jesus the resurrection from the dead" (verse 2). "If the apostles had merely announced a general truth of the resurrection", Mr. F. B. Meyer observes, "they would have become simply a sect of the Jews as the Pharisaic party was, and had never turned the world upside down; but they came forth with a light upon their faces not born of earth, a joy in their hearts supernatural and divine. They did not affirm merely that men shall rise; with unfailing courage and certainty, they said, He whom we knew in the days of his earthly ministry, and whom we saw on the cross, has actually risen. This story, told in the power of the Holy Spirit, revolutionized the ages."—*Doth this man stand here before you whole.* "No man in the world to-day has such power as he who can make his fellow men feel that Christ is a reality" (*Van Dyke*).

11. *He.* Jesus Christ.—*The stone.* See Ps. 118.22. Jesus quoted the words as referring to himself, Mt. 21.42-44.—*Set at nought.* Regarded as of no account, despised. Compare Mark 9.12.—*The head of the corner.* Instead of this figure of the cornerstone, that of the keystone would perhaps have been used had the arch been in common use. The use of the arch for bridges originated with the Romans.

12. *In none other is there salvation. Thou art my salvation* are the words which precede in the Psalms the words quoted in verse 11. The Greek has the article, *the salvation.—Under heaven.* In all the earth.—*We must be saved. We* in Greek has an emphatic position at the end of the sentence, as has also *Ye* in verse 7. By what name, have ye, ignorant men, done this? There is no other name wherein we,—you the judges and we the fishermen—must be saved. Here is the answer to those who claim that Christianity need not be offered to the followers of Buddha or Confucius or Mahomet.

13. *Boldness.* The Greek *word* παρρησία means literally free-speaking.—*Unlearned.* The Greek ἀγράμματοι means *without letters;* they were untrained as rabbis.—*Ignorant.* The Greek ἰδιῶται means *private persons,* not engaged in public office, common people. Perhaps our word *laymen* would give the actual thought of the rulers here. In Greece every man of ability shared in the public life and looked with scorn upon one who remained a "private person".—*They took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus.* Some scholars interpret this to mean merely that "their wonder sharpened their recollection". as Meyer says, and now, apparently for the first time, they recognize them as disciples of Jesus. Yet recalling the words of the Jews in regard to Jesus—How knoweth this man letters, having never learned? (John 7.15)—it seems rather that they recognized the fact that Peter and John had grown like their Master. What a compliment they paid Jesus in thus admitting that the disciples had caught from Jesus the contagion of courage! The Greek verb ησαν translated *had been* is in the imperfect tense. Dr. James W. Thirtle suggests that there is no need of rendering it "they had been"; that there is more of actuality in "they were". The apostles were recognized then and there, as being with Jesus, *i. e.* of the Jesus party. In like manner, we today are reported to agree in the judgments and practices of others—to be "with them". To the Sanhedrin it was immaterial whether the apostles "had been" with Jesus; it was enough for them that the men *were with him.*

14. *Seeing the man that was healed standing with them.* Recall how the people "took knowledge of him, that it was he that sat for alms," 3.10.

15. *To go aside out of the council.* Probably it was their practice to send away a prisoner while they held their discussions.

16. *What shall we do to these men?* As in the trial of Jesus, the Sanhedrin was concerned, not with the truth, but with what they deemed policy for themselves.

17. *That it spread no further among the people.* "As if that healing were a plague begun, the contagion of which must be stopped" (*Matthew Henry*).

19. *Whether it is right.* Peter does not question whether to obey the command of the Sanhedrin would be expedient to himself, whether it would pay; his only question is, Is it right?—*Judge ye.* He is respectful to their Judges, and makes an appeal to their consciences. Compare Acts 5.29.

20. *We cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard.* Compare 1 Cor. 9.16. "How magnificent the response! They felt their wills to be caught in the sweeping current of the Infinite!" (*Jowett*). "Tell the birds amidst the bursts of spring not to sing; tell the waters welling from the depths not to flow; tell the happy child not to laugh and jump; tell sun and stars not to shine; and when these have obeyed you, then tell the soul which has been baptized with the love of God that it must not speak of him, and it will laugh you to scorn. It cannot but speak what it has seen and heard" (*Meyer*).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

7. *When they had set them in the midst.* Peter and John, and the man who had been lame, stood facing the members of the Sanhedrin who sat in a semi-circle. In the midst of the semi-circle, on elevated seats, were the officers—the patriarch or president, the father of the house of judgment, or vice-president, and the sage, or referee—while the members themselves sat on low cushions, with their knees bent and crossed in the usual oriental manner. In front of the Sanhedrin sat three rows of disciples. Two scribes, or notaries, one on each side, faced the council: the one registered the reasons for acquittal of prisoners; the other, the reasons for condemnation.

The Sanhedrin consisted of seventy members besides the president: priests, elders of the people, and scribes. Their sessions were held every day except Sabbaths and festival days, and lasted from the close of the morning sacrifice until the beginning of the evening sacrifice. No one could be a member of the Sanhedrin who was not "Morally and physically blameless, middle-aged, tall, good-looking, wealthy, learned both in the divine law and divers branches of profane service, such as medicine, mathematics, astronomy, magic, and versed in several languages".

11. *The stone which was set at nought of you the builders.* The riches hid below the surface of the earth belonged to the Emperor. All quarries were managed and worked by his own private officers for his private purse. Every block that was quarried was inspected by the proper officer, and marked by him as approved. Our knowledge of the subject has been for the most part derived from blocks actually found in Rome, and which, therefore, were choice blocks sent to the capital. But at the Phrygian marble quarries there have been found many blocks, which had been cut, but not sent on to Rome. These are never marked as approved; and some of them bear the letters REPR, *i. e. reprobatum,* "rejected". These were considered as imperfect and unworthy pieces, and rejected by the inspector. *Sir William M. Ramsay,* in *Pauline and Other Studies in Early Christianity.*

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. When had Peter and John heard from the lips of the Master that they were to bear witness concerning him? What had he promised them in regard to the receiving of power? When had they borne their testimony? What did Peter say in his sermon at Pentecost? Who did he say should be saved? In one of our lessons last year, about what three young men did we learn who resolved to obey God rather than men? When did Saul say "I feared the people, and obeyed their voice", another lesson of last year?

The Result of Peter's Witnessing. In his first sermon, on the great day of Pentecost, Peter ascribed to Christ the coming of the Holy Spirit and appealed to the conscience of his hearers, aroused their sense of guilt in having crucified their King. Three thousand were converted and joined the Christian fellowship. In his second sermon, after the healing of the lame man, Peter ascribed the miracle to faith in the power of Jesus Christ, again accused the people of guilt in crucifying him, and appealed to them to accept him as the One who fulfilled their hopes, the One promised to their fathers and foretold

by their prophets. Many more believed and their conversion then brought the number of Christ's followers to five thousand.

The Arrest. Peter's second address was abruptly broken off by the coming of Christ's enemies. Hitherto the rulers had paid no heed to the work of the apostles. Either they did not know or they ignored the many wonders and signs wrought by the apostles and the growing numbers who believed in the Nazarene, but now the attention of priests, the captain of the temple and Sadducees, was drawn to the great concourse of people in Solomon's Porch. They were greatly offended at Peter's preaching, for the Sadducees did not believe in the immortality of the soul, and in proclaiming the resurrection of Jesus, Peter was preaching this doctrine. They arrested the two apostles, and because it was evening, time for the guards to close the temple gates and too late for a trial, they put the two in prison for the night. The first of the long line of persecutions was begun.

The arrest took place at "eventide", which was usually reckoned from 6 p. m. The hours between that and the healing of the lame man, at 3 p. m., must have been occupied by the preaching of which we have only a summary.

The Trial and Afterwards. Peter and John stand as prisoners in the presence of the Sanhedrin, the great Jewish tribunal at Jerusalem. Annas and Caiaphas, before whom Jesus had been brought after his arrest, the one called the high priest, the other the actual high priest, Alexander and John, and other great officials are present. "By what power or in what name have ye done this?" the court asks. Peter's courageous answer is our lesson. When they were released, after being commanded not to speak or teach in the name of Jesus, the two apostles went at once to their own company, told them what had happened, and prayed for power to do just what they had been commanded not to do, to speak with boldness. "And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spake the word of God with boldness."

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

After their arrest in Solomon's Porch the apostles were put in prison during the night, and in the morning were brought before the Sanhedrin for trial. The meeting-place of the Sanhedrin had been a hall called *Gazith,* the Hall of Hewn Stones, within the temple area, on the south side of the Court of the Priests, but it is thought that at this time they met in a hall on Mount Moriah outside the temple precincts.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

The children in your midst are watching and taking notes of you, your personality, your example. Is your image in their minds all that you could wish it to be? The novelist Dostoevsky bids you "every day and every hour, every minute, walk round yourself, and see that your image is a seemly one". The rulers took knowledge of the disciples that they had been with Jesus—to such an extent was the image of their Master reflected in their lives. It is not merely by his words but by the manifestation of his life that a teacher commends both himself and his mission to those whom he teaches. A teacher is a lesson the scholar never forgets. No photographic plate is more sensitive to the image that the sun paints upon it than is the child's intelligence to the teacher's example. Nor is it children only who are influenced by the teacher's personality. It was in a Bible Class in India that a Hindu student was asked how he thought that Jesus would come into the room if he were to visit them and replied, "I think he would come in just as Larsen comes into our class". You are conscientious in the preparation of your lesson, wise and skillful in teaching, zealous in organizing your class, and all this is good, for all this should be done, but when it is all done and done well, it will not avail if the truth is not incarnate in you, if you have not been with Jesus yourself.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. John Bunyan, the author of Pilgrim's Progress, was put in prison because he preached the Gospel, and was threatened with banishment from the country if, on his release, he continued to preach. But he said

to his persecutors, "If I were out of prison today, I would preach the Gospel again to-morrow, by the help of God".

Because they preached the Gospel after the cure of the lame man, Peter and John were put in prison over night, and then brought before the Great Court for a trial. Let us see how they accepted the command not to preach again after their release.

For Older Pupils. "If they persecute me, they will also persecute you," Jesus had told his disciples in his last farewell talk. "They shall put you out of the synagogues; yea, the hour cometh that whosoever killeth you shall think that he offereth service unto God. These things have I spoken unto you, that when their hour is come, ye may remember them, how that I told you." To-day we hear about the first one of the many persecutions which the apostles suffered as Jesus had forewarned them.

It was no wonder that the Jewish rulers were troubled because the disciples proclaimed in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. If Jesus had indeed arisen, then was he the Messiah, and then were they guilty of putting to death their King. The people were believing the witness of the apostles, the membership of the new sect was growing. The healing of the lame man was a miracle such as Jesus himself had wrought, and it had convinced many that the apostles wielded the same power that was Jesus'. "If we let him alone, all men will believe on him," they had said after Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. Now after the apostles had raised up the lame man, if they are let alone, will not all men believe in them and in Jesus as the Christ?

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Quit You like Men, Be Strong

An Explanation of the Fearlessness of Peter and John. After the Sanhedrin had threatened them and let them go, they returned to their own company and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said unto them. And they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, in their prayer, "And now, Lord, look upon their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants to speak thy word with all boldness". And when they had prayed, the place was shaken wherein they were gathered together; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spake the word of God with boldness. Luke does not tell us that they prayed for courage before being brought for trial, but we may be sure that they did.

Dr. J. H. Jowett, commenting on this passage, said: "For what did these men pray? They prayed for pluck. Does anybody think it to be unpractical, dreamily mystical, remote, to pray for pluck? Well, try it. You will be astonished at the extraordinary influence that prayer exerts upon wild or evil or perverse dispositions. These men prayed for pluck; and there was given them a sense of God's holy presence, and the assurance of triumph, and the mighty serenity that is born of a splendid hope."

True Manliness. Some little time ago a writer reported an interview he had had with K'ang Yu Wei, the Chinese reformer, who had to flee for his life from Peking in 1898. Let me quote part of one paragraph: "I asked K'ang Yu Wei, who had studied the Gospels profoundly, what seemed to him the most striking quality in Jesus. He answered, somewhat to my surprise, that what appealed to him most in the personality of Jesus was his courage—the manliness which could so quietly and dauntlessly face the hatred of so many of his fellow-countrymen, the fierce enmity of the proud Pharisees, and, above all, the certainty of death, and of the outward failure of his mission; the courage which undertook a work so constructive, the valor which could make, and could ask from others, such large sacrifices."

And what of the men who followed him? Timid and shrinking at the outset, they became lionlike in their courage, and doglike in their devotion, so that whether it was Peter and John before the Sanhedrin, Stephen before his murderers, or Paul before Hebrew Prince or Roman Emperor, the one outstanding fact, that which cannot but impress the impartial observer, is the strong, stalwart manliness they displayed, an honor to their Master, and an example to the world. You greatly mistake, therefore, if you imagine that Christianity stifles manliness, that the practice of prayer and the exercise of faith make a man a mouse,

or detract from the finest and most admirable qualities of our common manhood.

But can we come to an agreement as to the nature of manliness? More especially, what is Christian manliness? Manliness consists not in a big fist, a strong jaw and a loud voice, but in a true heart and honest mind, in a high conception and a resolute performance of duty combined with a sound ideal of the dignity of human life and the glory of human destiny.

The manly life is the God-controlled, the God-governed life. The strong man is he who recognizes that there is One stronger and greater than himself, One whom human hands have never touched nor men's eyes seen, but who is "not far from every one of us, since in him we live and move and have our being." *Condensed* from a *Sermon* by *John Hedley.*

II The Result of Fellowship with Jesus

They Continued their Fellowship with Jesus. As a shell that has floated on the sea at last fills itself with the sea, and sinks into the sea, so these disciples' lives, which had floated on the bosom of Christ's love, when at last the crucifixion came, filled themselves with Christ's love and sank into its depths. Thenceforward they must follow him. They followed him until he brought them to their crosses. They followed him across the dark river. They are following him to-day in some bright fields of the unknown eternity. But wherever they are following him, they are following in him these eternal principles,—the Love of Brethren, the Love of Right, the Love of God. *Phillips Brooks.*

The Best Lives are Those Lived Closest to Jesus. In a narrow street in the Holy City in the days of long ago lived old Tobiah, apothecary and seller of spices. Morning by morning while the dew sparkled on the grass and gathered in the tiny cups of the lilies Tobiah roamed over Olivet in search of rare herbs and choice flowers. And day by day he went through the city crying, "Buy sweet herbs and fragrant spices, buy to-day. God sends them, I gather them, buy of me".

Into the street at the sound of his call bounded Judith and Reuben, merry-hearted children of Miriam—wife of Ezra the shepherd. After Tobiah they ran, and into their hands he thrust bundles of spices, and upon their garments his perfumes he sprinkled. Tobiah loved children. At midday homeward the children wandered, radiantly happy. "Guess where we have been, mother, guess where we have been." "Ah, children," said Miriam, as the scent of the spices reached her, "so you have been with Tobiah again!" And then the wise Miriam added, "And quite right, my jewels; if you wish to be fragrant keep near to the seller of spices".

And was not that a beautiful thing to say? Keep near to the seller of spices. St. Paul said that in his own way to his Philippian friends. He told them that whenever they found anything they could reverence, anything that was pure or lovely or well spoken of, they were to fasten their mind upon it. Such things were to be the spices they were to handle every day. We become like the things we love. St. Paul knew that if these friends of his were to be good and pure and true they must keep near to the Seller of spices. And he knew of a wonderful Seller of spices—One whose wares were "without money and without price". The Lord Jesus is that Seller of spices, and the sweetest, brightest, happiest lives are those lived closest to him.

Our text tells us that that was the secret of Peter and John. They were simple men, yet they did wonderful things. And the reason they wanted to do them, and could do them, was "they had been with Jesus". They had been so long with him that they had become like him. And when the Jewish council looked at Peter and John, they said, "These men could never have done these things had they not been with Jesus". A lady who has a natural gift of mimicry once told me that when she was a little girl her mother could always tell with whom she had been by the manner in which she spoke when she came home. That is it. Our deeds and our words reveal with whom we have been. And is it not simply splendid to think that every lovely thing in our life—our truthfulness, our kindness, our cheerfulness, our love of right—may tell others that we, no matter how little or how lowly we may be, have been close to Jesus, just as the perfume of the

spices told Miriam that her children had been with Tobiah the seller of spices? *Herbert S. Seekings,* in *The Expository Times.*

III The Final Court of Appeal

God Only Need be Feared. Chrysostom, the archbishop of Constantinople, was a fearless reformer. He called evils by their right names, and was as relentless in his denunciation of those high in authority as of those in lowly position. He aroused the hatred of the Empress, and she commanded an official to threaten him that unless he moderated his zeal she would have him removed from his office and cast into prison, or even put to death. "Of what use will if be to say all that to a man who is afraid of nothing save of sin?" questioned the official.

The members of the Sanhedrin wished Peter and John to moderate their zeal as witnesses for Christ. They commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus, and they threatened them, probably telling them that if they disobeyed they should be imprisoned and perhaps put to death. But what use was it to threaten such heroes as these who feared only God?

Peter appealed to the conscience of his tormentors, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to hearken unto you rather than unto God, judge ye", he said, and then he boldly added, "We cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard". He who fears God need not fear men. He has the right fear.

When the charge was brought against Socrates of neglecting his country's gods and corrupting the youth of the land by his teaching, and he was condemned to death, that noble philosopher said, "O ye Athenians, I will obey God rather than you; and if you would dismiss me and spare my life, on condition that I would cease to teach my fellow-citizens, I would rather die a thousand times than accept your proposal".

When Luther at Worms was commanded by the Emperor Charles V and the Pope to recant, he replied: "I can not recant. It is not wise, it is not safe, for a man to do anything against his conscience. Here I stand. I can not do otherwise. God help me!"

Said William H. Seward in the Senate Chamber when the anti-slavery agitation was at its height, "There is a higher law than human constitutions".

When to be Stubborn. If you look in your dictionary you will find that stubbornness comes from a good old English word, not much used now, *stub*, meaning the stump of a tree. The branches have long since been broken off by the wind, and the trunk has been cut down to within a few feet of the ground, but how stiff and sturdy that stub stands! The fiercest gales cannot shake it. There it remains year after year, and defies the worst weather. And as you think of these sturdy stubs you will perhaps call to mind a stubborn man mentioned by Jesus. He spoke in words of the highest praise about him, and said to the people, "What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind?" They went out into the wilderness to see John the Baptist, and they found that, instead of being like a reed swayed in any direction by the breezes of men's blame or praise, he was a stub. Yes, but John was a reed when the breath of God's spirit touched him. And this is just the difference between men like Saul and men like John and Peter.

Saul was stubborn in doing wrong because he was afraid of the people, and Peter was stubborn in doing right because he feared only God. Read the two chapters, 1 Samuel 15 and Acts 5, carefully, and notice how Saul was obstinate, in spite of repeated warnings, in disobeying God, and how Peter was obstinate, in spite of repeated threatenings, in obeying God, and you will understand what I mean when I say that stubbornness is either a bad thing or a good thing according to the use we make of it. Saul was a reed when the people spoke, and a stub when God spoke. "I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord," he says, "because I feared the people and obeyed their voice." John and Peter were stubs when the people spoke, and reeds when God spoke. "Did we not straitly command you" said the high priest to Peter and the Apostles, "that ye should not teach in this name?" And Peter replied, "We ought to obey God rather than men". So they got a good beating. And what then? Why, they showed themselves to be real stubs, for directly they were set at liberty, "they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ". This is what I want you to get firmly fixed in your minds. If you are obstinate like Saul in doing what you like, your stubborn-

ness will be your ruin as it was his. If you are obstinate in doing what God wills, your stubbornness, like Peter's will have splendid results. *H. W. Shrewsbury* in *The Golden Snuffers.*

The Great Need of Today. There is great and peculiar need of this apostolic "boldness" today. The times imperatively demand the military attitude in the soul. The Christian character must be conspicuous for strength, intelligence, decisiveness, attack. Whatever may be allowed to lie in obscurity, or hidden away in secret and mystical depths, the masculinity of Christian discipleship must stand out in bold and flaming relief. I do not fear the serried hosts and hordes of organized deviltry if only the temper of the Church is steeled for the fray. There is nothing in the might and majesty of the foe to make us dismayed, but we do need to fear a soft and limp and flaccid Christianity. How do we stand in the matter? Can we say that the great characteristic of our modern discipleship is its boldness, and that by the very vim and pulse of our living we arrest the world in wonder? I must express my fear that we are creating vast numbers of pulpy Christians who are destitute of strong backbone. *Dr. J. H. Jowett* in *The Transfigured Church.*

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

He who made so fearless a witness out of so unpromising a man as Peter the denier of his Lord, can make a witness of you, can help you, as he did Peter, to live your daily life on high levels.

Does your life indicate that you have been with Jesus? "If you have enlisted for Christ as your Redeemer and your Master, then always, and everywhere, show your colors."

Our Prayer. Lord Jesus, we thy disciples sometimes lack courage as thy witnesses. Forgive us our cowardice, and give us such confident assurance and courage as had Peter, who feared only lest he should be disobedient to thy commands. We would be steadfast in our fellowship with thee, our Lord and Master, faithful to thy ideals, zealous in thy service. Make us strong and brave and true to thee alway.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Has the Church today the courage of its convictions in its witnessing for Jesus Christ? See Chapter XV of Dr. Jowett's "Transfigured Church"; Chapter VII of Professor Work's "Fascination of the Book".
2. Putting men on trial for doing a good deed.
3. The final court of appeal. See the Third Topic.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. What is the force of "therefore" in verse 1? (*Guide,* p. 100.) 2. What did Jesus say about loving one another? 3. In what parable and in what words did he say that exaltation is the reward of humiliation? (Lk. 14.7-11.) 4. Who was it that was vainglorious and said, "Lord, I thank thee I am not as other men"? (Lk. 18.11.) 5. What parable did Jesus speak to certain ones who "set all others at nought"? (Lk. 18.9-14.) 6. In what prayer did Jesus speak of "the glory which I had with thee before the world was"? (Jn. 17.) 7. On what occasion did Jesus take a towel and begin to wash the disciples' feet? (Jn. 13.3-5.) 8. With what words was this act prefaced, and what words in our lesson do they recall? (Jn. 13.3.) 9. Study the Epistle to the Philippians. (*Guide,* pp. 40-42.)

Questions to Think About. 1. Why has our Lesson Committee interrupted our study of Acts to take up this selection from Philippians; what bearing has it upon the previous lesson? (*Guide,* p. 102.) 2. What lesson have we had this Quarter from Paul's writings? 3. How many of Paul's letters have we in the New Testament? 4. What does it mean to "have the mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus"? (*Guide,* p. 105.) 5. Is is natural to count others better than yourself? 6. What is the meaning of verse 6? (*Guide,* p. 101.) 7. What is the meaning of verse 7? (*Guide,* p. 101.) 8. Instead of asserting himself, what did Jesus do?

Memory and Note-Book Work. Memorize Philippians 2.1-11. Write Chapter V, The Witnessing of Peter before the Sanhedrin.

HUMBLED AND EXALTED

Golden Text

For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich. 2 Corinthians 8.9

LESSON Philippians 2.1-11 MEMORIZE verses 5-7

1 If there is therefore any exhortation in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any tender mercies and compassions, 2 make full my joy, that ye be of the same mind, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind; 3 *doing* nothing through faction or through vainglory, but in lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself; 4 not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others. 5 Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6 who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; 8 and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient *even* unto death, yea, the death of the cross. 9 Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name; 10 that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven and *things* on earth and *things* under the earth, 11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

I. Exhortation to Like-Mindedness, Lowly-Mindedness, Other-Mindedness, Christ-Mindedness, 1-5.
II. Jesus Christ, the Supreme Example of Lowly-Mindedness, 5-8.
  1. His Duty, 6.
  2. His Incarnation and Crucifixion, 7-8.
III. His Humiliation Resulted in Exaltation and Universal Sovereignty. 9-11.

1. *If there is therefore.* In the first chapter of this book Paul has been telling the Philippians how it fares with him. "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if to live in the flesh—if this shall bring fruit from my work, then what I shall choose I know not. But I am in a strait twixt the two, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for it is very far better: yet to abide in the flesh is more needful for your sake." It is "fruit from his work" that he desires, and then he tells them, in effect, that his happiness depends on them, and how they may support him by being steadfast in the faith. Now, in verse 1 of the second chapter, he uses the word *therefore,* meaning, In view of what I have just written you about our mutual service, therefore I entreat you, etc. Dr. W. G. Jordan draws our attention to the fact that Paul's arguments always have a practical application; in his writings "therefore" is not the close of a theoretical demonstration, but it turns the particular train of thought in the direction of present duty.—*If there is any exhortation in Christ.* If I have encouraged you in Christ.—*If any consolation of love.* If there is any incentive from love.—*Fellowship of the Spirit.* Communion with the Holy Spirit.

2. *Make full my joy.* If I have done my part in the past, through the four proofs of loyal friendship just named in verse 1, then I entreat you, on your part, to make complete my joy, for my happiness depends on you, 1.27.—*That ye be of the same mind.* Have the same aim.—*Having the same love, being of one accord.* These causes define what he means by "of the same mind", or, Have the same aim.—*Of one mind.* Here he repeats the thought. "The unity of home life is not simply living in the same house and having the same name; it

means having the same interests, cherishing the same aims and hopes. The unity of the Church is not uniformity of worship or absolute sameness of creed, but rather the inspiration of love, a threefold love towards the Redeemer, the fellow-disciples and those who are still in darkness. Such love leads to that faithful, energetic service that is the best safe-guard against vain quibbling and useless quarreling" (*W. G. Jordan*).

3-4. If the Philippians and the apostle Paul possessed that "oneness of accord and mind" which he desires, then the results mentioned in these verses will follow, for "love and humility together overcome all divisive influences, and bring about the perfect socialism of the Spirit".—*Through vainglory.* "Vainglory means the personal vanity which incites a man to fight for his own hand, and push his own claims on all occasions, regardless of other and wider interests" (*Black*).—*Counting better.* The Greek word means literally *holding high above,* hence to count another as better than oneself, to esteem him as superior to oneself, as living on a higher level. Can we literally regard persons about whom we know much to their discredit, as superior to ourselves? Paul is writing to people all of whom are Christians. Paul spoke later of himself as "the chief of sinners". The deeper the Christian life, the greater the humility. See the first section under Topic III.

6-8. *Existing in the form of God.* He shared the attributes of God. The Greek word μορφή translated *form,* means not shape, but *essence.*—*As a thing to be grasped.* As a prize to be retained no matter what should happen.

7. *He emptied himself.* "He divested himself of that peculiar mode of existence which was proper and peculiar to him as one with God." From the Greek word ἐκένωσε, translated *he emptied himself,* is derived the Greek name *Kenosis,* the theological term used for this thought. "And that was the beginning of a marvelous self-renunciation which culminated in Calvary," observed Dr. J. H. Jowett in a recent sermon. "He emptied himself, he stripped himself of the glories of heaven in order that he might not terrify and paralyze the men on earth whom he came to save." And then Dr. Jowett gave this fine illustration of the thought: "A little while ago a great cricketer, whose tremendous bowling is known throughout the world, might have been seen in a tiny garden playing cricket with a little fellow not five years old! But the swift bowler had emptied himself, and was tossing the lightest, gentlest balls to suit the feebleness of his little mate".—*Taking the form of a servant.* "What Christ grasped at in his incarnation was not divine sovereignty, but service" (*Vincent*). The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many, Mt. 20.28.—*Being made in the likeness of men.* "To affirm likeness is at once to assert similarity, and to deny sameness" (*Dickson,* quoted by *Vincent*).

8. *Becoming obedient even unto death.* All Scripture glorifies Jesus as the obedient Man, there is no flaw in the harmony between his mind and God's mind, and the perfection of his obedience is demonstrated by his death.—*Yea, the death of the cross.* The climax of the extent to which he humbled himself, for the cross was to Jews a stumbling-block and to Gentiles foolishness, 1 Cor. 1.23. The Mosaic law uttered a curse "against every one that hangeth on a tree"; compare Heb. 12.2. "To a Greek accustomed to clothe his divinities with every outward attribute of grace and beauty, the summons to worship a crucified malefactor appealed as foolishness."

9. *Wherefore also God highly exalted him.* In consequence of this humiliation. Compare Mt. 23.12. The apostolic writers never leave Jesus on the cross; they add the fact of his resurrection, or, as here, of his succeeding glory and power.—*Gave unto him the name which is above every name.* Jesus Christ the Lord, verse 11.

10. *Every knee shall bow.* This is the language of Isa. 45.23.—*Things under the earth.* This was a Greek expression for *the dead.* Compare Rom. 14.9; Eph. 4.9.

11. *To the glory of God the Father.* The universal acknowledgment that Jesus is Christ, his Son, will glorify God the Father. Compare Mt. 10.40.

The Paraphrase. If there is an exhortation which comes from the heart of a man united to Christ, which is directed to brothers who likewise are one with Christ; if there are friendly words to which love incites; if there is fellowship in communion with the Holy Spirit; if there is hearty, sympathetic love for a

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pastor and mercy for him which would save him from all heart sorrow—then make my cup of joy overflow by living wholly in love and peace and harmony one with another. Never act from strife or vanity, but let each one humbly consider the other a better man than himself; do not selfishly consider your own interests alone, but consider the interests of others as well. Share the mind of Christ Jesus, be as like him in his way of thinking and doing as it is possible for you to be. He had divine attributes and rights, but he did not cling to them and eagerly display his equality with God. No, he sacrificed them for the sake of lowly service, was born in human form, stooped in his obedience even to death, and death such as is meted out to a common criminal, death on the cross! He that humbleth himself shall be exalted; therefore God brought him back to his throne, back to a rank and dignity that no other can share, gave him a name above every name, and to him all the world, all creation, whatsoever and whosoever, shall pay homage on bended knee, and every tongue shall confess that "Jesus Christ is Lord" to the glory of God the Father.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

6-11. Paul the prisoner seeks to impress upon the souls of his simple converts the image of his adored Object, drawn with vigorous lines. These lines were not written in the hard tone of a theological thesis. They can be understood only by the pious simplicity of silent devotion. Let us leave all our commentaries at home and ask an Anatolian Christian to read us the original text of this confession in the soft tones and psalm-like rhythm in which the Christian East is accustomed to hear portions of the Greek Bible read in the twilight gloom of the churches—then a part of the undertones of the old psalm becomes lifelike again. We are freed from our painful dependence on history, and we come into at least distant contact with the poor saints of Macedonia, who were the first possessors of the treasure. *Adolf Deissmann* in *St. Paul.*

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. What did Peter say about the name of Jesus Christ in his sermon at Pentecost? In our last lesson what did Peter say about the name of Jesus? What did he mean by this expression? What did he say about the resurrection of Jesus? What did the Sanhedrin say about the disciples Peter and John having had fellowship with Jesus? What led them to make this observation? In what way did the disciples show that they were not "looking each of them to his own things"? When did Peter speak about Christ's exaltation? Describe the period which we studied last year when every one cared nothing about the things of others but "did what was right in his own eyes."

Why our Study of the Acts is Interrupted by a Lesson from Philippians. In his sermon at Pentecost (Lesson III), Peter talked about Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified, whom God raised up, and who was "by the right hand of God exalted". When he addressed the excited crowd that collected at the healing of the lame man, he talked again about the crucified Christ whom God raised from the dead. After his arrest he was brought before the Sanhedrin (our last lesson), and he boldly accused that body of having crucified Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom God raised from the dead, and then affirmed that "in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven that is given wherein we must be saved". Now our Lesson Committee has given us Paul's words to the Philippians in which he speaks about the humiliation and exaltation of Jesus Christ, and about "the name which is above every name", and gives us the assurance that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

Paul's Epistle to the Philippians. See pages 40-42 of our Introduction.

The Church at Philippi. See pages 236-241; 250-253.

The Occasion for Paul's Words. Paul was very happy in his relation to the Church at Philippi, they were a source of joy to him. Yet reports of dissension among some of them may have reached him, hence the earnestness of his exhortation to cultivate a spirit of concord. He tells them that they can

make his cup of joy overflow, if they will all exhibit a spirit of perfect harmony and love. We shall study about this Church in our next Quarter's Lessons.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

This is a lesson in which the sin of selfishness—that ubiquitous sin—should receive your attention. One often hears it said that all children are selfish. Why should they not be? To be generous implies the ability to project oneself into another situation, and that ability comes with growth and with the right training. Even with children of larger growth selfishness is often due, not so much to innate hard-heartedness, as to the lack of imagination. There is the familiar story of Marie Antoinette. She had been brought up in all the luxuries of court life, and could not imagine the possibility—not to mention the resultant suffering—of the very necessaries of life being lacking in some homes, and when told that the poor had no bread to eat, she asked why they did not eat cake. A child who had more playthings than she knew what to do with stubbornly refused to take any of them to the "Giving Christmas Celebration" of the Sunday-school, but after she had been to the hospital and had seen for herself the suffering children, and how one poor doll was cherished by many little mothers, her selfishness changed to the most generous eagernesss to give them all she had. You can train your pupils to lives of unselfishness by helping them to see the needs of others, and helping them to gain the imaginative power that can put themselves in another's place.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. At Philippi, a city in Macedonia, the apostle Paul had founded a church, and today we have a selection from a letter which he afterward wrote them. Like a father or an elder brother he is writing to them and telling them how he wants them to live. We shall hear later much about Paul; nearly three-fourths of all our lessons this year are about him and what he wrote to his various churches, so today we will give our time wholly to what he wrote in this part of the second chapter of his letter to the Philippians. Where does the first sentence end? Such a long sentence needs explaining, and this is what the first part of it, the first verse means.

For Older Pupils. At the first glance, it seems strange that our story of the Acts is interrupted by a selection from Philippians, but a study of its contents shows how Paul's words emphasize and enlarge much that Peter has been teaching. What is the connection? (See the Historical Background.)

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Altruistic Preference

Can we Account Others Better Than Ourselves? Whether we can yield obedience to this apostolic rule in its strictness or not, one thing is clear: it would be an immense improvement in the life of our Churches if the spirit of the saying could be caught and generally honored more than it is.

First, the Christian's personal experience of sin prepares the way for this quality of altruistic preference—each counting other better than himself. When one comes to Christ in a first clear vision, the light of his face makes things visible which no other light can reveal. There is something in the initial view of sin in that Presence, like our first clear view in the morning light when we wake to the full day, of a thing we have seen intermittently through dark hours of restless and broken repose. In Christ's light, and only in his light, we see our sins nakedly, stripped of all excuses and mitigations, just as they are to the mind of God. I say, this thing begins to be with our first authentic glimpse of Christ. It goes on through all the increasing revelation which years of discipleship bring.

Now, on the other hand, while our own sins are thus revealed in all their terrible verisimilitude and uniqueness, it is not long before we realize that the sins of others can be estimated only by God, who knows the secrets of all hearts. I cannot judge of your sin, only of my own. Only the Divine scales are sufficiently complex for the task of such judgment, and they take into their reckoning the powers of grace which environ man, the visions of truth he has received,

the angels who minister to his spirit, the tokens and lovingkindness he has had from his Lord. The ethical quality of our acts is determined by the measure of our light.

Second, the experience of grace is also fundamental to the practice of altruistic preference, and further brings us into an attitude of charitable hope concerning our fellow-Christians.

We can but know that what he has been to us is only an illustration of his continual and manifold dealings in the secrecies of souls. We are told by a modern scientist that the earth intercepts of the sun's energy only the 2,170-millionth part; the rest is poured out into other regions, upon other worlds. Even so the best Christian knows that glorious as his Lord may be to him, he only gathers the tiniest fraction of what the Lord is to his Church generally. The sunshine of the grace of Christ floods beyond him, filling multitudes of other souls whose capacities may be far greater than he can dream.

It is out of these twin experiences of sin and of grace this Christian virtue springs—"each counting other better than himself". Is it so very difficult after all? Observe it is not that we are expected to know for a fact that our fellow-members are on this higher level of Christian life, only that we should account them so. Inevitably we form estimates of each other. Around the image in my mind of this man or that there cluster impressions, ideas, recollections, surmises. Therefore, because this is an inevitable process, let me control it by the principles which Christian experience suggests. The truest safeguard against a secret injustice of opinion concerning my fellow-Christian is to count him better than myself. And only when the secrets of all hearts are revealed will it be known who is last and who first in the kingdom of our Lord.

Therefore let us have much humility. Let us think of our fellow-Christians in the best and most hopeful light, never looking out for faults, but always hoping for graces. If a fellow-Christian falls, let us not, as the manner of some is, blazon the thing abroad, telling it with evident relish. Rather let us say in ourselves, "Well, by now he has perhaps taken it all to Jesus Christ, and like Peter wept bitterly; and the Lord, like himself, has appeared in the Spirit to his fallen servant, as after he was risen he appeared privately to Peter". For though we often see the fall of a Christian, we hardly ever see the bent knees, the bowed head, or hear the sorrowful cry, "I have denied my Lord". *Condensed* from a *Sermon* by *A. D. Martin.*

Not Looking Each of You to his Own Things, but Each of You also to the Things of Others. One hot July evening the Hadleys were gathered about the dinner table, when Hilda spoke, according to a story I have read: "Mother, Celia Lamont just won't take 'no' for an answer—about my going to the mountains with them. I don't see why I can't if I'm willing to go without new clothes. Doctor Stubbs says that every one ought to take a vacation." Aunt Nancy looked up quickly, as if she were going to speak, but at the moment she said nothing. After supper, however, she stopped Hilda out on the piazza. "Doesn't it make a difference", she asked, "whether you take your own vacation, or some other person's?"

"What do you mean?" Hilda asked, uncomfortably; she stood in awe of Aunt Nancy. "Well, I suppose there's just about so much money for vacation in this family—there generally is. Did Ruth go away last year?" "She didn't want to," Hilda replied, flushing. "Or the boys?" "Boys don't care." "Oh, don't they! Did you ever notice Kent's face when he handles his fishing-rod? Or Rob's when you speak of the mountains? And your mother—when did she go away last?" "Why, mother doesn't ever go *any*where!" There was sheeer amazement in Hilda's voice now. She even forgot her annoyance at Aunt Nancy in the absurdity of the thought. Aunt Nancy's comment was dry. "She looks it", she said, as she turned away.

For a moment Hilda stood stunned; then she ran upstairs in a blaze of anger and locked her door behind her. But she could not lock out Aunt Nancy's words—"Whose vacation do you want? She looks it—she looks it". *Whose vacation did she want?* Rob's? Kent's? Ruth's? *Her mother's?*

Korean Christians. A missionary in Korea overheard two natives talking about the Christians. "What do you think about this new faith? Are you going to be a Christian, too?" One of them asked the other and the latter replied;

"No; how could I? I have to think of myself, and these Christians—they are always thinking of others!"

II Sharing the Mind of Christ

What it Means to Share the Mind of Another. Billy Muldoon is a master of the art of building up muscle; he believes that physical regeneration can not be accomplished without the use of the mind, and he often thinks his mind is better than that of his pupil. "Sir, you have no mind," he will say to a new patient. "For the next six weeks you will have the infinite advantage of Billy Muldoon's mind."

Paul believed that the Philippian converts needed the infinite advantage of Jesus Christ's mind. Have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus, he wrote them. What does it mean to have the mind of another? My answer is in Dr. Jowett's words, heard in a recent sermon. When we have the mind of anybody we share their very springs. It is so much more than a resemblance in detached and single habits; it is to have their "way of looking" at the world, their way of feeling, their way of approaching matters, their way of doing things. It is to be like them in the pattern-chamber of the life, where conduct is originally fashioned, and where all the outside issues are finally determined. It means that our chambers of imagery are furnished alike, that we are "one in the secret things we contemplate and love". If we are like anybody in mind, we will resemble him in everything. And is it not full of gracious inspiration that the possibility is held before us of sharing "the mind of Christ"? It is possible that, even though the walls of our minds be covered with unclean imagery, or with conceptions altogether misproportioned or untrue, they can be completely refurnished, and graced and glorified by "the things of Christ"? We can be "renewed and transfigured in mind".

How to Achieve the Mind of Christ. It is a different thing from learning precepts about particular details of life. It is a greater thing than committing to memory the Ten Commandments. To achieve the mind of Christ, to obtain the point of view from which he would look at human problems, is a larger thing than getting a code of rules; it is rather the achievement of a ruling spirit which possesses and actuates all one says and does and is. In another place the apostle tells us, "For me to live is Christ".

To find out what Christianity is and how it is to be fitted to our modern life, or to one's individual career, it is necessary to study the life and the work of Jesus as a whole. We must find the fundamental system of thought and attitude which entered into the ordering of that matchless life of the Son of man and the Son of God. We must catch his spirit, his way of looking at things, his eternal standard of righteousness and love. We must become so saturated with his thought and purpose that we can say naturally, as he said, "I do always those things that please Him."

Then we have possessed ourselves of the Christian point of view; we have found a principle from which we may look out with clear and sure eyes toward every new changing scene of our daily life. In this effort to get the mind of Christ we can depend upon God's steady co-operation. *Clayton S. Cooper.*

III In the Name of Jesus Every Knee Should Bow

The Significance of the Name Jesus. There's a rare threefold sweetness of meaning in that five-lettered name. There is the meaning of the old word lying within the name, before it became a name, victory, victor, savior-victor, Jehovah-victor. There is swing and rhythm and murmur of music, glad joyous music, in its very beginnings as a common word.

Then it has come to stand wholly for a *personality,* the rarely gentle, winsome, strong personality of the Man of Bethlehem and Nazareth, and of those crowded service-days. And every memory of his personality sweetens and enriches the music in the old word.

And then the deepest significance, the richest rhythm, the sweetest melody, comes from the meaning his experience, his life, pressed into it. The sympathy, the suffering, the wilderness, the Cross, the Resurrection, all the experiences he went through, these give to this victory-word, Jesus, a meaning unknown before. They put the name Jesus actually above every name in the experiences of

tense conflict and sweeping victory it stands for. This threefold chording makes music never to be broken nor forgotten.

"There is no name so sweet on earth,
No name so sweet in heaven,
The name before his wondrous birth,
To Christ the Savior given."
S. D. Gordon, in *Quiet Talks about the Crowned Christ.*

The Name which Is Above Every Name. What most of all distinguishes Jesus from Mohammed, Gautama, or the Buddha, is his mediatorial function, his sacrificial salvation. Neither of these teachers offered himself to men as Savior, or has proved himself able, as Christ has, to save to the uttermost all who come to God through him. Buddhism has deified its founder in its later form, the Mahayana, contrary to his intentions, and appeals to him for help. But we still wait for an authentic instance of an original, and not imitative Buddhist experience which can compare with Paul's being crucified and risen with Christ. Is Mohammed the intimate companion, the availing comforter, the mighty deliverer of the pious Moslem as Christ is of the Christian? These questions carry their own answer. Jesus has brought God to man in his life, death, and resurrection, and brings man to God in penitence, faith, love, hope, through his grace, as no other master has done, or can. Hence his name is above every other name, for in that name is salvation. The comparative study of religions has not dethroned him from that Sovereignty of Saviorhood which Foreign Missions seek to make actual unto earth's remotest bound. *Alfred E. Garvie,* in *The Missionary Obligation.*

The World is Ready for the Name. An article in *Collier's Weekly* written after several months of the terrible European war, contains these well told truths.

In other years men have written his name high or low, according to the temper of the time. There have been generations in which no business was so urgent as the task of adding glory to that name. And again, suddenly, the flags of battle have flown high: the lowly banner of his cross trails behind them, in the dust: in guilty afterthought the rulers turn to implore his blessing, placing his name again at the end of their ambitions and hate.

But his name cannot occupy that place. Underneath the roar and smoke of battle there are signs to-day that the world is groping its way back to him. One finds them in the market-place, the council-chamber and the office. Even in the midst of battles come cries of men in their helplessness, putting his name above that of their leaders. Wherever families gather silently about a vacant chair, his name is breathed on the lips of women and little children.

When, at length, weary of war, the world turns its scarred, blood-bathed face, seeking peace, it will be his name in which its prayer will be raised. Across the ruin of men's hopes his voice will answer back:

Peace I leave with you,
My peace I give unto you.

Out of the war will be born a new list of heroes. But when these, too, in time shall have been forgotten, the eyes of men will still turn upward to behold his name.

Among rulers, his yoke alone is easy, his burden light. Among reformers he alone dared to teach men that they are relatives of God and so the equals of their kings. He, too, was torn and wounded. But in the moment when the world had crushed him he could say: "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world".

For faith like that, the tired race is ready now. The age is ripe for him again. The name that nineteen hundred years ago was written upon the census rolls, is to be the "name which is above every name: that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord".

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

A follower of Christ Jesus must learn to conquer self-conceit and avoid factions, to forget self and to look with kindly interest on the things of others, to make the example and the inspiration of his life him who became poor

that we might become rich, to empty himself of all that interferes with his being of service to his weak and needy brother, and to bow in homage before the enthroned Christ, confessing that he is Lord.

"I hail the power of Jesus' name,
Before him gladly fall,
Bring him my own heart's diadem
And crown him Lord of all!"

Our Prayer. O Eternal God, we bless thee for the holy name of Jesus, the name around which gather the most sacred memories, the name which distils upon our hearts the sweetest peace, the name which charms our fears and bids our sorrows cease. "All hail the power of Jesus' name." We thank thee that we live in the time when this name is above every name. We bless thee for the men who believed on this name when it was obscure, and gave us the record of his life. Help us to-day to realize how much we owe to the name of Jesus Christ. (*George Skene.*)

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Strife versus love. See chapter XIX of the Rev. Hugh Black's "Listening to God".
2. The voluntary humiliation of Jesus Christ. See Chapter XI of Dr. Jordan's "Philippian Gospel".
3. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians. See pp. 40-42 of our Introduction.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. How large was "the multitude of them that believed"? (Acts 4.4.) 2. What has Luke before this said about the spirit of unity and love that prevailed in the early Church? (Acts 2.42-47.) 3. What great commandment did the early Christian Church fulfil? (Mt. 22.39.) 4 Where is Cyprus? 5. What did Jesus once say about making "friends of the mammon of unrighteousness", and what did he mean thereby? 6. What was the sin of Achan, and in what respect does it resemble that of Ananias? (Josh. 7.) 7. What did Jesus say in the Sermon on the Mount about doing things to gain the approval of men? (Mt. 6.1-18.) 8. How did Jesus regard shams of all sorts? 9. What did he once do to hired mourners who simulated grief? 10. What is said about lying in Lev. 19.11? 11. In Prov. 12.22? 12. What is said about Christians and truth in Col. 3.9? 13. What is the prayer of Ps. 120.2?

Questions to Think About. 1. What is the meaning of the phrase "of one heart and soul"? 2. Does "they had all things common" mean that all individual ownership was given up? (*Guide,* p. 108.) 3. Is "laid them at the apostles' feet" to be taken literally? (*Guide,* p. 108.) 4. When did Jesus tell a young man to sell all he had and give to the poor, and why did he tell him this? 5. Did he mean that every one should do so? 6. Did Ananias and Sapphira have a right to keep back part of the price? (Verse 4.) 7. Wherein, then, lay their sin? 8. How did Ananias sin against the Holy Spirit? (*Guide,* p. 109.) 9. Why is Ananias rather than Peter taken as the type of a liar? (*Guide,* ¶ 5, p. 113.) 10. What was the motive that prompted Ananias' sin? 11. What expression is common among us that comes from the story in the fifth chapter? (Membership in the Ananias Club.) 12. Was the lie of Ananias spoken or acted? 13. Did you ever know any one named Ananias or Sapphira? 14. What are the advantages of a lie? 15. What are the disadvantages of a lie? 16. What effect upon the character has the habit of indulging in "white lies"? (*Guide,* p. 114.) 17. What effect upon your reputation has such a habit? 18. Which is worse, a lie found out or one not found out? 19. What is the sin of a lie? 20. How can we "keep back part of the price" from God? (*Guide,* "What the Lesson Means for Us", p. 115.)

Memory and Note-Book Work. In your Note-Book upon the Pauline Epistles leave space for the completion of your account of Romans and to-day write about the Epistle to the Philippians. See pp. 40-42 of our Introduction. In your Book entitled "Lessons from Paul's Words" write a paraphrase of Philippians 2.1-11.

THE CHRISTIAN BROTHERHOOD AT JERUSALEM
(Temperance Lesson)

Golden Text

Love one another from the heart fervently. 1 Peter 1.22

LESSON Acts 4.32-5.16: verses 4.32-5.5 printed MEMORIZE verses 34, 35

4 32 And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and soul: and not one *of them* said that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. 33 And with great power gave the apostles their witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. 34 For neither was there among them any that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, 35 and laid them at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto each, according as any one had need.

36 And Joseph, who by the apostle was surnamed Barnabas which is, being interpreted, Son of exhortation), a Levite, a man of Cyprus by race, 37 having a field, sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet.

5 1 But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession, 2 and kept back *part* of the price, his wife also being privy to it, and brought a certain part, and laid it at the apostles' feet. 3 But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back *part* of the price of the land? 4 While it remained, did it not remain thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thy power? How is it that thou hast conceived this thing in thy heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. 5 And Ananias hearing these words fell down and gave up the ghost: and great fear came upon all that heard it.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

I. The Church a Brotherhood, 4.32.
II. The Witnessing of the Apostles, 4.33.
III. The Consecration of Wealth and the Relief of the Poor, 4.34-5.11.
  1. A Special Instance of Genuine Generosity, 4.36-37.
  2. An Instance of Counterfeit Generosity, 5.1-11.

32. *Of one heart and soul.* A proverbial expression for the greatest unity of feeling and purpose.—*Not one of them said that aught of the things he possessed was his own.* Each one, then, actually possessed his own property, but he did not treat it as such, he *said* it belonged to all.—*They had all things common.* This "community of goods" was voluntary, not compulsory. From 5.4 we see that this means each one regarded his own property as held in trust for others, not that all individual ownership was given up.

33. *With great power.* This seems to imply that miracles were wrought in connection with the preaching.—*Great grace was upon them all.* Grace from God; God's free favor was helping them.

34. *For.* This word indicates that the generosity recorded in this verse was the proof of the divine grace recorded in the last verse.—*Neither was there among them any that lacked.* "Nobody ought to have everything till everybody has something" (*Winston Churchill*).—*As many as were possessors.* From the entire account it seems that this selling of possessions for others was not universal, but was done now and then as the need for help arose.

35. *Laid them at the apostles' feet.* This is a figurative expression, arising probably from the oriental custom of laying gifts at the feet of kings, and meaning merely that the gifts were left in the apostles' control. The apostles afterwards begged to be relieved from this duty, Acts 6.1-6.

36. *Barnabas.* He was afterwards associated with Paul in his work. "In the calendar of the English Church he is entitled an 'apostle', and he is the only saint (besides St. Paul and the Evangelists) outside the Twelve who is honored with a red letter day" (*Rackham*).—*Son of exhortation.* "The word is compounded of *Bar* and *Nabi,* and literally signifies *the son of a prophet,* or of prophecy. According to the New Testament language, prophecy is not so much the prediction of the future, as an inspired discourse, and embraces both exhortation and consolation. Barnabas was probably so called on account of his remarkable powers of exhorting the people, and administering to them consolation. See Acts 11.23" (*Gloag*).—*A Levite.* Originally the Levites had been forbidden to hold land (Num. 18.20), but this prohibition had probably fallen into disuse by this time, and was never extended to land outside of Palestine.

37. *Having a field.* Because the Levites had no share in the land of Canaan under the old Mosaic law (Num. 18.20-24), it has been suggested that this field was in Cyprus.

1. *But.* In contrast with Barnabas' true generosity.—*Ananias.* "Jehovah is gracious."—*Sapphira.* "Beautiful." "Their names were favorable and beautiful; their principles bad" (*Bengel*).

2. *His wife also being privy to it.* They had planned together the deceit. *Laid it at the apostles' feet.* "So it happens that he rather honors the feet of the apostles than the eyes of Jesus" (*Calvin*).

3. *Why hath Satan filled thy heart?* "The cause of the overt act is a heart *filled* with sin; for that is why Satan fills the heart" (*Abbott*). "Here in the early Apostolic Church was a beautiful thing, the spirit of mutual sacrifice. 'I must work through that', said Satan, 'and corrupt it'. Ananias and Sapphira talked their 'giving' over, and Satan was present. 'It seems a lot to give up everything', said Ananias. 'Couldn't we keep a bit to fall back upon?' ('They'll never know,' whispered Satan.) 'You know, Sapphira, we are getting older.' ('And you can get your ends more cheaply', suggested Satan.) 'Let us give part!' ('You can keep it quiet', insinuated Satan.) And so they agreed" (*Dr. Jowett,* in *Sunday School Chronicle*). *To lie.* R. V. Margin, *to deceive.* A lie may be acted as well as spoken.—*To lie to the Holy Spirit.* In a town in India, a British agent decided to shade the native shops by planting some peepul trees, but when the shopkeepers learned of his intention they declared they would move. The peepul tree is considered sacred by the Hindus. "We cannot tell untruths or swear falsely under a peepul tree", they said, and naively added, "and how can we carry on business otherwise?" When Peter asked Ananias, "Why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Spirit?" and when he asked Sapphira, "How is it that ye have agreed together to try the Spirit of the Lord?" he impressed the truth that God's presence overshadowed them always, and they had not sinned against men but against God. Compare "against Thee, Thee only have I sinned", Ps. 51.4.

4. This verse shows that the selling of property was wholly voluntary, and that the sin of the couple was not in retaining a part of the purchase money, as they had a perfect right to do, but in pretending that the part they offered was the whole, in seeking to gain unmerited reputation for liberality. *Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.* See Ps. 51.4.

5. *Gave up the ghost.* Died. "Our mission is not to justify the ways of God to men, but to rectify the ways of men to God" (*Faunce*).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

32. *They had all things common.* Settled on the northwest shore of the Dead Sea, and living in scattered communities throughout Palestine at this time, were the Essenes, a sect that had literally all things common. Each one deposited whatever he possessed in a general treasury, of which several managers took charge, supplying from it the needs of all. In Egypt there was a Jewish sect called the Therapeutai whose members gave away all their possessions when they joined the order, and there was among them no distinction of rich or poor. Among the early Christians at Jerusalem the giving up of one's possessions was voluntary. Property was sold and the money placed at the disposal of the apostles only as some rich and generous member saw there was need.

36. *Joseph, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, which is, being in-*

terpreted, Son of exhortation. In oriental lands people are often given names with a meaning by their associates. A missionary in China says that one man whom he knows is always called "Old Wait-a-bit" because of his habit of procrastination; another is known as "Angry Face", and three members of one family are known as "Bath-every-day-man", "Bath-once-a-week-man", and "Never-bath-at-all-man".

6. *They carried him out and buried him.* Because the body begins to decay soon after death in the warm climate, and because of the Mosaic law concerning defilement arising from contact with a dead body (Num. 19.11), it has always been the common custom among the Jews in Palestine to bury the dead on the day of death. Ordinarily soon after death the body is washed, wrapped in spices and cloth, and wound round and round with bandages. Ananias probably was wrapped in his own outer garment, and carried on an open bier and placed in a niche in a cave, the customary place of burial.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. How many followers of Jesus were there at the ascension of Christ? How many at the close of the day of Pentecost? How many after the healing of the lame man and the preaching of Peter? What did Paul say in his letter to the Church at Philippi about being of one mind? Whose example were they told to follow? What did our Golden Text for that lesson say about the poverty of Jesus? What did the lesson text say about Jesus' self-sacrifice?

After the First Arrest. When Peter and John were released by the Sanhedrin after their first arrest (our lesson two weeks ago), they went at once to the meeting place of the company of believers, and reported the threats which the Great Council had given with their order not to teach or preach in the name of Jesus. All realized the seriousness of the situation. Together they repeated the second Psalm, which they recognized as a prophecy fulfilled in them, and then the apostles appealed to God to help them do what they had told the Sanhedrin they should do, speak his word with boldness. The answer to their prayer came in a sign: the place where they were was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit.

The Christian Brotherhood. The apostles had been guilty of "contempt of court". They had renounced their allegiance to the great Jewish tribunal, and theirs became an independent church, responsible only to their heavenly Leader. At first, they made no effort to form any ecclesiastical organization. They met in private houses, they used the Psalms for praise, they repeated the Lord's Prayer, and they met frequently, probably weekly, to partake of the Lord's Supper, which was often followed by a church supper, partly for its social fellowship, partly to provide food for those in need. The one condition of their fellowship was love and loyalty to the Master, and although consisting of some five thousand people, because they had this one mind in common, they lived without faction and vainglory in an absolute, equal brotherhood. The rich shared their possessions with the poor, and no one lacked.

Trouble within the Church. Three hours after the events recorded in our printed text, the body of Ananias had been buried and Sapphira, all unknowing of the fate that had befallen her husband, came in. Peter asked her if she had sold the land for such a sum. "Yes", she answered, "for that sum", and then Peter charged her with having agreed with Ananias to put the Spirit of the Lord to a test in an attempt to deceive him. Just then the returning steps of the young men were heard at the door and Peter told Sapphira that they should carry her out and bury her as they had her husband. She, too, fell down dead, and Peter's words were fulfilled.

Great fear fell on all the people because of this judgment of God on sin. The presence of God with the church was believed and insincere people feared to join them, but the number of true believers increased continually.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The scene of the lesson is Jerusalem. It was probably at the regular meeting-place of the church that Ananias and Sapphira met their fate. Cyprus, mentioned as the native home of Barnabas, is an island in the eastern Mediterranean

where many Jews had settled. The suggestion has been offered that Barnabas was educated at the University of Tarsus on the neighboring mainland, and that there he had made the acquaintance of Paul. Compare Acts 9.27.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

In all our teaching we must get at the spirit underlying actions, and give principles, rather than rules, for right conduct. The spirit of unity and generosity and brotherly kindness which prompted those who had possessions to sell them and give all the money for the poor is what you will commend in their action, and the spirit of insincerity and hypocrisy and desire for applause which animated Ananias and Sapphira is what you will condemn in them, rather than their failure to give all their money for the poor.

Coin of Cyprus

In the matter of truthfulness, it is in the intent to deceive that the wrong of an untrue statement or action lies. Truthfulness is not necessarily inherent in children, and has to be taught just as speech is taught. There are some children possessed of very active imaginations who imagine things which have no relation whatever to fact, and since what they imagine is for them the truth, they have no intention of deceiving when they give voice to their imaginings. One need not be disturbed by such "untruthfulness".

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. A young orphaned girl who was very rich was greatly troubled on hearing it said that the rich owe their money to the poor. "Why do I owe my money to the poor?" she asked: "Why should I not spend it for myself if I choose? My money came to me and it was meant for me, not for the poor." A friend interested her in a summer country home for poor little children, and when she had learned what joy there is in caring for others she exclaimed: "O, it is true after all, I do owe my money to the poor, I who have so much am only given it in trust for those who have so little". The men and women at Jerusalem who believed in Jesus Christ and who listened to the teaching of the apostles were most of them poor, but no one was allowed to suffer, for those who had possessions believed that it was their duty to help care for those who had none. When they sold a piece of land or a house, to whom did they bring all the money?

For Older Pupils. When the eighty delegates to the Peace Conference in Constance, Germany, in the summer of 1914, were told that they must leave on Monday because after that the railroads would be handed over for the mobilization of troops, they found the situation a serious one. The banks were closed, and many of them had not sufficient money on hand to take them home. Then the secretary suggested that all should put their gold in a common pot, and divide it up among them all. The suggestion was instantly adopted. A hat was placed on the table, and each one emptied into it all the gold he had. Then, in the language of our lesson text, distribution was made unto each, according as any one had need. The treasurer purchased eighty tickets to London, and gave two dollars to each delegate for food on the way. Thus by having all things in common they were all enabled to reach home quickly. Of course a record was kept of the amount deposited by each delegate, and on arriving in London those who had received more than they gave made good the difference.

The experience reminded them all very forcibly of the time in the early church when all disciples had all things in common.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Brotherhood in Action

Love One Another from the Heart Fervently. This love is a precious thing: our Savior saith, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye shall have love one to another". So that he maketh love his cognizance, his badge, his livery. Like as every lord, most commonly, giveth a certain livery to his servants, whereby they may be known that they pertain unto him; and so we say, "Yonder is this lord's servant", because he weareth his livery; so our Savior, who is Lord above all lords, would have his servants to be known by his liveries and badge, which badge is love. Whosoever now is endued with love and charity is his servant; him we may call Christ's servant, for love is the token whereby you will know such a servant that pertaineth to Christ; so that charity may be called the very livery of Christ: he that hath charity is Christ's servant. *Hugh Latimer,* in a *Sermon.*

What Brotherhood Means. As long as men are not equal in brain power, in physical power, and in the ability to live, it should be the duty of those who possess the most of these good gifts to aid those who lack. Yes, even a desire to help those who have brought their troubles on themselves. Brotherhood means a mutuality of respect among all nationalities, for the Norwegians, the Hungarians, the Poles, and all the oppressed races that seek our shores, for in many respects they are more deserving than we are. The Italian may bring us the Black Hand, but he brings us also a love of art; the Scandinavian brings industry and thrift, the negro brings his sunny disposition, and the Chinese brings us patience and economy, which we Americans are sadly deficient in. Each brings something besides cheap labor. And we are not a Christian nation if we decry them, if we look on them as mere cogs in the wheel to cheapen living. We must recognize in them the elements of humanity that we lack and rarely see evidence of in our daily lives. The doves that flutter at our doors and windows at Ellis Island are not all white by any means. Is it to the Throne of God they come? What are we doing to them? So, are we a Christian Nation? The merchant owes more than a weekly salary to his employee; the head of the house owes something more than wages to the cook. The man in the factory, the boy or girl behind the counter, all whom we meet on the street are our brothers and sisters and deserve our love and sacrifice. They are here that we may lay down our lives for them as Christ laid down his life for us, and that alone makes a true Christian people; and by such Christians we can find a real Christian Church and a Christian nation. *Dr. Lyman Abbott.*

Christian Socialism. As every one knows, the term "Socialism" has a multiplicity of shades of meaning. A company on board a steamer were discussing political questions. One man sat aloof from the rest and took no part in the heated argument. "What are you?" questioned one of the others, and he replied "I am a Socialist". "Then we are brothers, for I am one, too," exclaimed the questioner. "But I must explain further," returned the man quietly, "I recognize two sorts of Socialists, and I would like to know, before acknowledging brotherhood with you, which sort you are. There were Socialists even in the time of the apostles, for we read that 'they brought their possessions'; but now there is also another kind of Socialist of whom it may be said, 'they would take their possessions away from the rich'. I am a Socialist of the first sort; what are you?" What Christian socialism is, Dr. Robert F. Horton admirably defines in these words:

It is possible to define Socialism in such a way that it is not only consistent, but identical, with the earthly mission of Christianity, if, for instance, we define it in this way: a social organization in which all men's good is each man's rule, in which each one thinks not of his own interests, but of the whole, in which co-operation and mutual aid have taken the place of competition, and in which equal rights and opportunities are offered to everyone. A Socialist in that sense will labor for the weak and for the unfortunate; he will seek to alter institutions in the direction of mercy and of justice; he will put public interests before private interests; he will attach more importance to life than to property; and, indeed, he will limit the rights of property by the interests of the community. He will admit no rights without corresponding duties; he will de-

fine wealth, not in terms of material possessions, but it terms of real well-being. The wealth of the country will to him be the stock of healthy, happy and virtuous lives that are lived in the country.

They Gave All that they Had. Dante G. Rossetti, on reaching home after his wedding tour, heard of the death of a young painter named Brough, who had left a wife and two little children. Rossetti knew that the widow would be practically destitute. He had spent all his own money, but a certain portion had been invested in jewelry for Mrs. Rossetti, who fully sympathised with the widow. When they reached London they did not go straight home, but drove first to a pawnbroker's, then to Mrs. Brough's lodging, and after that home, with entirely empty pockets, but with two very full hearts. *Sunday School Chronicle.*

Lincoln's Words on Washington's Birthday. Day after tomorrow we celebrate Washington's Birthday, and I am sure you will be interested in hearing what Lincoln, then President-elect, said about brotherhood at Philadelphia on February 22, 1861. He was on his way to Washington, and stopped at Philadelphia to participate in the raising of a new flag at Independence Hall. Standing in front of the Hall with the halyards of the flag in hand, he said: "When the flag was originally raised here it had but thirteen stars. I wish to call your attention to the fact that, under the blessing of God, each additional star added to that flag has given additional prosperity and happiness to this country until it has advanced to its present condition; and its welfare in the future as well as in the past is in your hands. Cultivating the spirit that animated our fathers, who gave renown and celebrity to this Hall, cherishing that fraternal feeling which has so long characterized us as a nation, excluding passion, ill-temper and precipitate action on all occasions, I think we may promise ourselves that not only the new star placed upon the flag shall be permitted to remain there to our permanent prosperity for years to come, but additional ones shall from time to time be placed there until we shall number, as it was anticipated by the great historian, five hundred millions of happy and prosperous people."

II What is a Lie?

The Guilt of Ananias and Sapphira. Are you inclined to say that Ananias did not lie because he did not say a word, nor did Sapphira, because when she said they had sold the land for a certain sum her answer was partly true, since the land had been sold for that sum plus something more? Do you hold that there are black lies and white lies, and that the lie of Ananias and Sapphira could be called a white one?

What is a lie? Webster defines it as a falsehood uttered or acted for the purpose of deception; an intentional violation of truth; an untruth spoken with the intention to deceive; and then he gives these two quotations: "The proper notion of a lie is an endeavoring to deceive another by signifying that to him as true, which we ourselves think not to be so". "It is wilful deceit that makes a lie, by pointing a finger in a wrong direction when a traveler inquires of us his road."

Why has the name of Ananias and not that of Peter become synonymous with that of liar? Peter lied three times when he denied his Lord; Ananias and Sapphira lied but once. A lie is always a lie and always wrong, but some lies are baser than others. The motive and the manner of Ananias' lie were baser than those of Peter's. Peter's lie was prompted by a desire to shield himself. Ananias' lie was prompted by the love of praise. He wished to gain the good opinion of others, to establish a reputation for generosity, benevolence, self-sacrifice, but he would not pay the cost and give as Barnabas gave. He was a hypocrite, and the motive back of the hypocrisy was like that of the hypocrites whom Jesus condemned so scathingly. "Take heed that ye do not your righteousness before men to be seen of them", said he; "When thou doest alms, sound not a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do". To Peter the temptation came suddenly and he yielded, and afterwards he repented bitterly. Ananias and Sapphira lied deliberately: they were thoroughly false at heart. Together they planned to retain a part of the price and to pretend to give away the whole, and had their plan succeeded, their deceit not been found out, instead of repenting, they would have congratulated themselves on their success.

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How "Chinese" Gordon Valued Veracity. Chinese Gordon, the hero of Khartoum, went to India in 1816 with the Viceroy of that country as his private secretary. Soon after they landed, the Viceroy received a bulky pamphlet from a local magnate. Wishing to conciliate this magnate, the Viceroy asked his secretary to write the man and say that he was greatly indebted to him for the pamphlet, which he had read with the greatest interest. Gordon pointed out that the paper of the pamphlet had not been cut, and he could not therefore say that it had been read with the greatest interest. The Viceroy argued that it was manifestly impossible to read all the voluminous printed matter sent to him, and that his words were a mere figure of speech. Gordon declared that he could not reconcile his conscience to stating that the Governor General had read and enjoyed the pamphlet, and he resigned his appointment and sailed for China on the next steamer.

Where the Peril Lies. It is a fatal mistake to tell what some call the light lies. They may harm no one else, but they must inevitably harm the one who utters them. One can not afford to indulge in them because of their effect on his own character. Insensibly the conscience becomes less true and the moral sense less keen. White lies told make the pathway easy for the black ones to follow. Well does Kant classify truthfulness among the duties to self. Falsehood he places on the same level with suicide: suicide is the taking of the physical life, falsehood the destruction of the moral life.

III Temperance Lesson

Brotherly Love and Temperance. Wherever there is genuine brotherly love in a community every effort possible will be made to keep men sober, to take out of their path all temptations to drink, to put into their lives all possible incentives for temperate, sane living.

In a recently published book of addresses Mr. James Bryce speaks of being most forcibly struck by the difference between the rapid progress of early Christianity and the slow progress of modern evangelization. And he accounts for the slow progress on the theory that the white trader's ways contradict the white missionary's promises. "Your duty does not end with subscribing to the missionary societies," says the former Ambassador from Great Britain. "It requires you to watch wherever over the world the advance of Christianity is being hindered by the wicked practices of white men, to see that the adventurer and the trader are restrained if they wrong the natives by force or fraud, and absolutely to prohibit the sale of liquor to the natives. The natives ought to be regarded as children, and have the measure both of care and tenderness which is given to children, for under the conditions in which their lives have been passed they cannot be expected to rise quickly to the level of civilized men."

The Business of Being a Man. An article in a recent number of *The Outlook* with this heading proves to be an argument for letting alcohol alone. It tells about the tests of memory and judgment made by Emil Kraepelin of Munich. Memory and judgment depend upon the association of ideas. The brain makes connection as does the operator in the telephone exchange. When alcohol is present, the operator in the brain dozes and makes faulty connections, if she does not go to sleep altogether. Memory halts and the judgment is untrustworthy as long as alcohol paralyzes the switchboard.

Lieutenant Bey, of Sweden, made a study of the effect of alcohol on his soldiers. He tried them on accurate firing, quick firing, and endurance firing without alcohol and after a forty-gram dose. Then he made a map of the records and circulated it throughout Europe. It shows a lowered efficiency in shooting each time the moderate dose was taken.

Satan's Right-Hand Man. I am the mightiest king that ever lived. Other kings have yielded to me as a child to its sire; even have I laughed at all the gods of every land, from Osiris to Jehovah.

With my breath I have wiped whole nations from the face of the earth.

For me have men discarded honor and women virtue. I destroy ambition, shame priests, debauch nuns, ruin statesmen—and still, still they love me.

I fill insane asylums and prisons, house my subjects in hovels and feed them on husks. Still they love me.

Fathers give me their sons, mothers their daughters, and maidens their lovers, and beg me to stay.

With one touch I have ruined great industries.
Judges yield to my power and advocates forget under my spell to plead.
I burn cities. With one touch have I sunk navies and destroyed great armies.
I never sleep.
I turn gold into dross, health into misery, beauty into caricature, and pride into shame. The more I hurt the more I am sought.
I, by turns, raise a man to highest heaven and sink him to deepest hell.
I am Satan's right-hand man. I do his work freely, cheerfully, and without pay, yet he is ashamed of me.
My name is RUM. Have you ever heard of me? *Farm and Fireside.*

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

Ananias "kept back part of the price". He made it appear as though he were giving all and he was only giving a part. And I, too, can keep back part of the price. I can bow before the Lord, in the attitude of prayer, as though I were offering him my all, and it is only a seeming offering, for I am keeping back my mind and soul. In my speech with my fellow men I can keep back part of the truth. I can offer an apparent courtesy, which in reality is packed with bitterness. I can "smile and smile, and be a villain". It is holiness that the Lord seeks, allness, wholeness, everything stamped with his seal. He seeks the completeness of the offering, all our life and all our estate, so that all "that is within us" and all that is without us may praise and bless his name. *Dr. J. H. Jowett.*

Our Prayer. Most righteous God, lying lips are an abomination to thee, but they that deal truly are thy delight. Help us to hate a lie, to scorn a "white lie", to have a true sense of what is right in thy sight. Deliver our souls, O Jehovah, from lying lips and from a deceitful tongue. In the name that is above every name we ask this.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Is a lie ever justifiable? See *The Outlook,* Aug. 1, 1914, p. 780.
2. The love of praise. See Chapter XII in "The Gift of Influence" by the Rev. Hugh Black.
3. Is municipal socialism possible or desirable? See Chapter III of Dr. Abbott's "Christianity and Social Problems".

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. Why were the apostles imprisoned a second time, how did they escape, and what did they do? (Acts 5.17-25.) 2. When the rulers summoned them, what did the high priest say they had done? (Acts 5.28.) 3. What answer did Peter make? (Acts 5.29-32.) 4. What was Gamaliel's advice to the Sanhedrin? (Acts 5.33-39.) 5. What did the apostles have to suffer before they were freed? (Acts 5.40, 41.) 6. What do we know about the growth of the Church from Acts 1.15; 2.41, 47; 4.4; 5.14? 7. How did the Grecian Jews differ from the Hebrews or Palestinian Jews? (*Guide,* p. 116.) 8. What three conditions must the new body of officers fulfill. 9. When Moses found his burden too great who were appointed to help him? (Ex. 18. 13-20.) 10. When and for what purpose did Jesus appoint the Seventy? (Luke 10.1-9.)

Questions to Think About. 1. Is it surprising that priests should join themselves to the company of believers? (*Guide,* p. 117.) 2. What is meant by "the daily ministration"? (*Guide,* p. 116.) 3. How could all the "multitude" of Christ's followers be called together in one place? (*Guide,* p. 116.) 4. Where could they have met? (*Guide,* ¶ 2, p. 119.) 5. What is the office of a deacon in some of the churches today? (*Guide,* p. 116.) 6. Why is our Golden Text well-chosen for this lesson? 7. What is our class doing to help bear the burdens of others?

Note-Book Work. Write Chapter VI, The Christian Brotherhood at Jerusalem and the First Trouble within the Church.

THE SEVEN HELPERS

Golden Text

Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. Galatians 6.2

LESSON Acts 6: verses 1-7 printed MEMORIZE verses 2, 3

1 Now in these days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a murmuring of the Grecian Jews against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. 2 And the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not fit that we should forsake the word of God, and serve tables. 3 Look ye out therefore, brethren, from among you seven men of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. 4 But we will continue stedfastly in prayer, and in the ministry of the word. 5 And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaus a proselyte of Antioch; 6 whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands upon them.

7 And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem exceedingly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

I. The Second Trouble within the Church, 1
II. The Apostles' Decision, 2-4.
III. The Seven Helpers Chosen and Consecrated, 5, 6.
IV. The Growth of the Church, 7.

1. *In these days, when the number of disciples was multiplying.* The last verse of the preceding chapter tells us that the disciples ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus as the Christ; the result was the multiplying of the number of Christ's followers. For notes of the growth of the Church, see Acts 1.15; 2.41, 47; 4.4; 5.14—*Murmuring.* Complaining.—*The Grecian Jews.* They were the Hellenists or Jews who spoke Greek. They used the Greek Old Testament (the Septuagint), had absorbed some of the Greek culture, and were broader-minded, more liberal towards the Gentiles, than were the Hebrews, the Jews who spoke Hebrew.—*Because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration.* By the "daily ministration" is meant the daily distribution of food to the poor, as verse 2 makes clear. The Greek word διακονία translated *ministration,* means *service.* Those who have tried to administer funds for charity know how difficult it is to avoid a "murmuring" of some one. In the early Church the distribution had been well carried on as long as the numbers were not too great, for the apostles had the oversight of it all, but such administration had now been outgrown.

2. *The twelve called together the multitude.* Not all the five thousand or more were met together but all who responded to the call for a public meeting of the Church.—*Forsake the word of God and serve tables.* Neglect their preaching to look after the distribution of food to the needy. From the Greek word διακονεῖν, translated *to serve,* comes our word *deacon.* In Phil. 1.1, Paul refers to the deacons, and in Tim. 3.8-13 he prescribes the qualifications necessary for this office; and it is generally thought that from this choice of the Seven for a special service the office later sprang. The office has been permanently retained in the Christian Church, but with different functions in different denominations. "The Methodist Church has deaconesses. In the Roman Catholic Church the deacon is an assistant of the bishop; in the Episcopal

church he assists in the administration of the communion and is a teacher of the Scriptures; in the Congregational church the deacons are nominally the dispensers of the charities of the church, really the pastor's spiritual advisers; in the Presbyterian church the office is rarely practically maintained, its duties generally devolving upon the elders."

3. *Seven men of good repute.* "Every Jewish community was presided over by seven men commonly called 'the seven good men of the city'" (*Lindsay*). "If there were need of seven men for this, how great in proportion must have been the sums of money that flowed in" (*Chrysostom*).—*Full of the Spirit and of wisdom.* The management of the so-called secular interests, as well as that of the religious interests, of the Church requires wise, Spirit-filled men. "It needed great philosophy to hear the complaints of the widows" (*Chrysostom*).

4. *The ministry of the word.* Their work of preaching and teaching. "The secret life of prayer alone prepares and qualifies for the public life of ministry" (*Holden*).

5. The names are all Greek, but such were common even among the Hebrews. We will hear more about Stephen and Philip, but the others are not again mentioned. *Nicolaus a proselyte.* This is the first mention of one who was not a Jew being counted in the Christian church.

6. *They laid their hands upon them.* So Moses had laid hands upon Joshua. Num. 27.18-23; Dt. 34.9. "This is the first mention in the New Testament of what has grown into an ecclesiastical rite. The laying on of hands accompanied the gift of healing (Acts 9.17, 18; 28.8); the consecration of disciples to a particular work, as in this case; or the impartation of the special gift of the Holy Spirit, followed, at least in some cases, by visible signs of his presence and power (8.17; 19.6). The rite has since passed into the Christian church; in nearly all denominations it is employed in the ordination of ministers, and in those in which the rite of confirmation, supplemental to baptism, is employed it is made an important part of that rite" (*Abbott*).

Ordination of a Deacon From a Bas-Relief in the Catacombs

7. *A great company of priests were obedient to the faith.* "This is not surprising. For, on the one hand, adherence to the new faith did not interfere with the performance of their duties in the Temple; on the other, there was a great gulf between the ordinary priests and the class of ruling and wealthy 'high-priests'. The latter acted towards their brethren like tyrants: some of them went so far as to rob them of their tithes. So when a large body of the priests joined the apostles, it would have the effect, politically, of a very practical protest against their Sadducean rulers: it had something of the effect of a political demonstration: and we notice that Luke uses a word (obey) which would indicate a transference of allegiance" (*Rackham*). "It does not necessarily follow that all the new adherents to the church were spiritual converts. Many of them, like some of Christ's earlier disciples, probably apostatized from the faith, when they learned all that it involved, Jn. 6.66. Such apostasy was evidently not unknown in the apostolic church, Heb. 6.4-6" (*Abbott*).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

1. *The Grecian Jews.* Jews from everywhere came on annual pilgrimages to the Holy City, and many stayed on there permanently. Just as in Jerusalem to-

day there are separate synagogues for "Sephardim Jews" and for "Ashkenazin Jews", so in the Acts we find evidences of separate synagogues for Greek Jews from Cilicia or other parts of Asia Minor, and from Africa. Some of these Grecian Jews had become "obedient to the faith" of the apostles.

1. *Their widows were neglected.* Where no provision for the poor and aged was made by the State, their support was one of the most pressing duties of the religious body. Among the poor in oriental countries the case of *widows,* left without any legal protector, was particularly hard. The Jews had a fund for the relief of widows and orphans, and the church could not but provide for her own. In return for their support the widows, like Anna the prophetess (Lk. 2.36-38), devoted themselves to prayer and good works. Such widows formed a recognized body; their names were entered on a roll; and Paul in writing to Timothy devotes a whole chapter to their organization. Already at Jerusalem there is a body of widows in the church, and a little later we shall find them at Joppa (9.41). *R. B. Rackham* in *The Westminster Commentary.*

These widows, as oriental widows in general are, were not always pleasant subjects to deal with; wanting a great deal in knowledge on account of their seclusion and their ignorance, which are common to widows in eastern life—wanting a great deal of the shrewdness and wisdom and humor and high character that make visiting aged and sick folks among ourselves so often a pleasure and an inspiration. *Dr. George Adam Smith.*

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. To what size had the Christian community now grown? Through whose witnessing? What was their theme? When some of the Christians sold their possessions into whose care did they give the proceeds? For what purpose was the money used? Were there many poor in the Church? What trouble from without had come upon some of the apostles? What wrong within had troubled them? What lesson did we have last year about three widows? How were the two who returned to Bethlehem supported? Whose duty was it to support them?

Believers are Multiplied. Since the events of our last lesson many miracles have been wrought through the hands of the apostles, and great numbers of the people have believed them "signs" from heaven. Popular enthusiasm has grown from day to day; faith in the apostles' power has become so great that the people even believe that Peter's shadow falling on the sick in the streets will have healing virtue. People beyond Jerusalem have heard the news, and have come to the city with the sick and demon-possessed.

The Apostles are again Imprisoned. The jealousy and enmity of the high priests and Sadducees are now thoroughly aroused, and they are bent on severer measures than before. They have the apostles imprisoned, but the latter are divinely liberated. Early the next morning the members of the Sanhedrin learn that their prisoners have escaped, although the prison is found securely locked and the guards at the doors, and at the same time they are informed that the apostles are standing and preaching in the temple. They are greatly perplexed. What can be done with such defiant men who have an unknown Ally to help them out of prison?

The apostles are quietly brought before them, for they fear to use violence because of the people. The high priest charges them with disobedience to the command of the Sanhedrin, and with intent to make its members answerable for the death of Jesus. "Behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your teaching", he exclaims in his wrath. What a fine testimony to the work of the apostles, coming from their bitterest enemy! The secret of their success and the reason for their disobedience of the lawful Jewish authorities Peter announces in one brief, eloquent sentence, "We must obey God rather than men." Then, strong in the consciousness of the presence of God, he calmly adds that the apostles and the Holy Spirit are witnesses of the resurrection of Jesus whom they, his enemies, had slain.

No wonder the authorities are angry enough to kill Peter and the rest. But there is one cool person there, a learned doctor of the law named Gamaliel, who has the prisoners removed and then calms the excited members by reminding them of others who had "given themselves out to be somebody"—Theudas and Judas of Galilee—but whose claims had come to naught. He advises

that these men be let alone, for if they are imposters their work will be overthrown, but if they are divinely commissioned, then the authorities will be fighting against God. Gamaliel has the courage of his opinions, not of his convictions; he advises a temporising policy, to await what the issue may be. The Sanhedrin listen to Gamaliel. The apostles are freed after being beaten and again charged not to speak in the name of Jesus. They depart rejoicing that they are counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the Name, and every day, in the temple and at home, they cease not to teach and preach Jesus as the Christ.

New Conditions. Evidently some period of time separates the sixth chapter of Acts from the fifth, for the Hellenists, or Greek-speaking Jews, now form a considerable part of the Church, and we even hear of a proselyte from Antioch who was not a Jew at all. The burden of the management of affairs has increased till it has become too great for the apostles alone to carry.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

We are still studying the events that happened in Jerusalem after Pentecost. The place in which the apostles were imprisoned was probably a room within the temple enclosure; when they escaped they went into the outer court and there taught the people, and then were taken to the council chamber of the Sanhedrin without the temple walls. The church meeting was probably held in the courtyard of some member's house.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

It was not meet that the apostles should take time from prayer and from the ministry of the word to serve tables. It is not meet that a Sunday-school teacher should take time from prayer and from the ministry of the Word to keep the record of attendance, to pass the Bibles, to take up the collection, to open the windows, to look after the necessary machinery of the class work. Every class should be organized; the secretary should keep the records, the treasurer should take the collection, etc. A teacher should not minimize the dignity and responsibility of his office. The bigness of his message and the greatness of his opportunity should so captivate his mind that he can not devote it to routine matters; and having the responsibility of the latter will be excellent for his pupils. Billy Sunday does not pass the hymn books nor lead the singing—a teacher's work, though limited, is just as urgent as his.

Nor should a teacher allow his teaching to be less effective because he must give considerable time to other and less important church activities. His teaching of a Sunday-school class should not be merely one of many church services, unless he is giving his entire time to church work. A teacher cannot rightfully go to a class unprepared because he has been getting up a church concert, or helping with a church supper. First things must come first, and if there is not time also for secondary matters they should not be undertaken.

The fruitfulness of teaching, as well as of preaching, depends upon one's continuing steadfastly in prayer. The life of prayer qualifies for the life of teaching. "As the mariner adjusts his compasses before a voyage, so the servant of Christ prepares himself for the ministry of the Word."

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Begin with the Historical Background.

For Older Pupils. What are some of the business activities of our church? What men have charge of the finances? What charities do we maintain, and who manages them? Who is at the head of the religious work of the church? What sort of character must a minister have? Are the same qualities needed in those who manage the interests of the church of which we have just been speaking? What did the early church think in regard to this?

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Bear One Another's Burdens

Two Children.

Does the child in the home see the child in the street
Running all day with cold bare feet?

Does the child in the school ever pause in her play
To think of the child in the factory all day?
Do the people so rich ever stop in their leisure
To give five cents for a poor person's pleasure?
Alas, I'm afraid they don't stop to think
Of how closely Christ with the poor did link.
Eunice James, in *The Survey.*

The Joy of Burden Bearing. A little girl, orphaned and almost sightless, who "b'longed to the state," as she quaintly phrased her dependence, was being educated in an institution for the blind. When the summer vacation came and the other children went to their homes, those in authority tried to make a pleasant change for Hazel also, by placing her in some rural home where they were willing to receive her. So it chanced that one summer evening she was on a suburban sidewalk with a group of children who were new acquaintances. They had a little wagon in which they were riding by turns, and were generously ready to give their handicapped little guest even more than her share of rides, but she would have none of it.

"Oh, I want to push!" she said. "I like to get tired." With some one else drawing the wagon she could help to propel it by pushing, and with her hands resting on the back, her small feet trotted fearlessly after it, while she lifted a radiant face to repeat, "I like to get tired!"

It was a little incident to make the onlooker thoughtful. We, who so often complain of our weariness, forget the blessedness of having a part in all the activities that bring it. Heart, head and hands may tire with their many tasks, but it is the healthful fatigue of those who have been able to plan and to accomplish something; it is not the weariness of those who are forced to stand aside and feel themselves useless while burdens are lifted by stronger arms, and harvests gathered in which they have no share. The weariness of labor is joy to those who have known the weariness of enforced idleness. *Forward.*

II Fulfill the Law of Christ

The Lesson that Christ Came to Teach. The supreme lesson which Christ came to teach was that no man liveth to himself; that we who are strong ought to bear the burdens of the weak. If there is yet one higher joy than that of paying the debt we owe, surely it is that of paying for others their debt which we do not owe. Alone of all great teachers, he came to add this to the beauty, dignity and joy which this brief life affords us. Christ offers this supreme possibility to you—even so far you may have the joy of walking in his footsteps. Honor and lasting joy will come to you only as you pay and in proportion to the amount the payment costs you. *Wilfred T. Grenfell.*

When One is Judged as to whether he has Fulfilled the Law of Christ. The things that are valuable are the things that are praised after death has come. Would you know what things are really worth while? Well, the next time some leading citizen dies, listen to what people say of him. In the eulogy that is pronounced you will never hear anybody say: 'He lived in the finest house, he drank the best wines, he rode in a gorgeous carriage, he made a million dollars.' Why, once a man is dead, they no more speak of the pleasures of his body than they speak of the color of his fingernails or the length of his hair. When a man is dead, people unconsciously and automatically cast about to see if there was any spiritual quality or moral virtue of self-sacrifice, or purity, or love for the widow and the fatherless, any gifts to Christ's poor. *Dr. N. D. Hillis,* in a *Sermon.*

Ways in which we may Fulfill Christ's Law. "Bear ye one another's burdens." What can we do for one another in regard to this burden of sin? No man can touch the burden of his brother's guilt. No man can go back into another man's yesterdays, and put the crooked straight. When Judas had betrayed Christ, and saw he was condemned, he brought back the thirty pieces of silver, saying: "I have betrayed innocent blood". What can you do for that man's guilt? You cannot touch it.

The only thing we can do with people who are burdened with the guilt of their old sins is to bring them to the Savior of the world; we can do nothing but bring them to the old fountain, "opened for sin and uncleanness". We can

begin to lift a man's burden, by bringing him to the Master, who can take away his sins. It is a glorious sharing of the burden. We can do it by counsel, and by gentle guidance and by mighty intercession.

I have seen men and women, who were withering under the sense of sin, brought by their fellow men to the Lord Christ, and their burdens have rolled away. As John Bunyan says: "I saw it no more".

Conversion does not annihilate temperament. Every regenerated man has to fight the good fight of faith, and his warfare is determined for him by the peculiarity of his own mental and moral constitution. The consequence is that every life has its own campaign, its own battle; and, therefore, I call this second burden the burden of temperament.

"Bear ye one another's burdens." Can we do it? I think we can. We can help the man with the temperament like a powder magazine into mastery, or send him into servitude; we can throw lighted matches round about his magazine, or we can spread cooling influences over his soul. We can take sides with the devil or with the angels. This is the meaning of helping one another in the carrying of temperamental burdens; to consider and steady one another from the standpoint of chivalry in the Christian life, and to determine that, by our conduct and demeanor, we will help to fashion the life in our brother, to give him triumph in the realm of grace and help—just as Greatheart in the "Pilgrim's Progress" helped Mr. Feeble-Mind, Mr. Ready-to-Halt, and others, until all reached the heavenly country, the fragrant land where bloomed the lily of eternal peace.

We need one another, and without one another we shall be heavily laden; and to live a selfish, self-centered, and exclusive life is to rob humanity of its due, and to dwarf and impoverish one's self.

The streets of our cities are filled with burdened people, wounded people, sore people; and people are often sorest and most burdened who keep a smiling face. And so it behooves us to put away all brusqueness and thoughtless speaking, and move about with care among our burdened fellows.

Some have never found Christ because they have never looked for him in the right place. I will tell you where you will surely find him. Find out somebody who is burdened. Put your back beneath their load, and you will know that the Savior is there. I never knew it to fail. He bore our griefs and he carried our sorrows. He is carying them still; and if you want to be near him, get under the burden, and you will find him there. *Condensed* from a recent *Sermon* by *Dr. J. H. Jowett.*

III The Importance of Secular Service

The Commonest Duties Demand the Highest Qualities. How forcibly does this lesson teach the need of the highest character and gifts for the right discharge of life's lowliest duties! The apostles could not at the same time minister in two spheres successfully; they therefore confined themselves to their spiritual work; yet the ministry of tables was in no wise depreciated by their action. They chose men of good report, full of faith, wisdom, and of the Holy Spirit.

The commonest duties of life demand the highest qualities, and, indeed, they can be fulfilled perfectly only with the soul at its best. Some gardeners, it is said, can grow orchids better than wall-flowers; and society abounds in dilettante people who court great places and things, despising homelier posts and callings.

When princes like Stephen were thus made stewards of carnal things, let me not forget the sovereign and sacramental character of the secular, or that the utmost saintliness and wisdom are necessary for the ordinary routine of life.—*Dr. W. L. Watkinson.*

The Work of Modern "Deacons". "The most surprising thing about Sunday-school extension", says a writer who views it as a wonderful contribution that this country is making to the world's good, "is that the great syndicate that directs it is made up of business men, not of preachers or philanthropists. It is essentially a layman's work, and all the compensation that any of them get out of it is the joy of working." This is the age of laymen's work, and some old lines of division between what is secular and what is religious have been going

down before a clearer realization that all our employments are, or should be, for the Master's service. *Forward.*

Identify the Spirit of God with the Practical and Ordinary. One of our modern heresies is to associate the Holy Spirit solely and exclusively with rapture and ecstasy, with praise and devotion, with demonstrations and conventions. Under his guidance men have borne testimony and transfigured communities: we, of course, all believe that; but when, in spite of pressure and custom and education, a business man deals squarely and straight, there also is the Holy Spirit. The seven deacons were God-filled men. When a woman, in spite of worry and irritations, carries herself in a home like a gracious queen, there also is the Spirit of God. The cloistered mystic needs the Divine guidance, and he has it, but no more than the devout politician. Some of the Fathers of the Middle Ages spoke of the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of statecraft and politics. The minister needs his inspiration to shape and edge his message, but no more than the man who tills the soil and plies the oar. Let us dare to be practical. Every impulse to do right, every embargo on doing wrong, is a sign of the presence of God. The thing that attracted me most in the Welsh revival was that aspect which was universally criticized—the daring of its young leaders to say that the Holy Spirit commanded them to do ordinary things. Why? To rule the Holy Spirit out of ordinary things is to rule him wholly out of the lives of the majority of people. I believe we would attain the ethical revival we seek if we were to dare to identify the Spirit of God with every moral impulse and humanitarian instinct, with the dictates of conscience and the throbbings of the helpful heart. Let us dare to identify God with what is practical and ordinary. From a *Sermon* by *Thomas Phillips.*

John Bright's Services to his Country. Dr. R. W. Dale, who was a lifelong friend of John Bright, once whispered to him after he had delivered a splendid oration, "I have been thinking what a preacher you would have made!" Bright replied, "I hope I have always been a preacher of righteousness".

That phrase, "a preacher of righteousness", summarizes accurately John Bright's lasting services to his country. It was said of Gladstone that he had "kept the conscience of England alive"; it might have been said also of Bright. In one of his speeches he said "The moral law is not intended only for individual life, but is intended also for the life and practice of states". There sounds the keynote of his faith. At a time when men were materialistic in their political outlook he called his countrymen to high morality, and lifted their thoughts to a lofty plane. It was because of this that a political opponent termed Mr. Bright "the honourable and reverend member". *Sunday School Chronicle.*

The Industrial Service Movement of the Y. M. C. A. Several thousand American college boys are already placing the powers that their education has given them at the service of those less fortunate than they. They are teaching classes of foreigners in English and civics, they are leading clubs of working boys, they are instructing shopmen in mathematics and mechanics, they are teaching hygiene and "first aid" to factory hands, and in all these activities they are giving the sort of help that promotes better understanding, improves social and industrial conditions, and transforms individual lives. College men, for example, are teaching technical subjects in labor-unions and the instruction has again and again been the means of raising the wages of union members. Employers and labor leaders alike approve.

The Industrial Service Movement of the Young Men's Christian Association has organized the work. It began eight years ago at Yale, and has grown so rapidly that today 3,500 undergraduates from 160 colleges are in mutually helpful contact with 60,000 laboring men. The work pays the students—not in money, but in the satisfaction of service, in a wider knowledge of men, and in increased ability to deal with others with sympathy and intelligence.

But Forsake not the Word of God to Serve Tables. There ain't nothin' wonderful about the success that Paul had. Just look at the facts. He, maybe, was an uncommon good Christian, but he didn't do nothin' else, accordin' to his own statement. Now look at my wife's preacher. He leads the choir, and is president of the singin' society, and holds office in two of our lodges, and he is a brother Mason besides. He takes an interest in the young folks and goes to the baseball and football games. Paul didn't do nothin' but be a preacher. I could be a pretty good Christian myself if I put all my time to it. *Life and Light.*

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

When the apostles wanted laymen for church work they chose men who were "full of the Spirit and of wisdom". Spiritual and mental qualifications are needed by men and women who attend to the business-end of church work. All things can be done "to the glory of God".

Is our minister carrying more and heavier burdens than he should for our church? What part of them can we shift to our shoulders?

Our Prayer. Teach us, our heavenly Father, how to live for others, how to bear one another's burdens. Strengthen us for service, we pray thee, through the consciousness that we are doing as the Master did and fulfilling his law.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Is there danger of a church being so interested in "the serving of tables", that is, along institutional lines, as to neglect the greater service along inspirational lines? See *Literary Digest,* June 7, 1913, p. 1280; *Atlantic Monthly,* Feb., 1915, p. 161.

2. Our problems of church administration.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. What is told us about Stephen's character in the sixth and seventh chapters of Acts? (6.3, 5, 8, 10, 15; 7.55, 56, 59, 60.) 2. Read Stephen's speech carefully. 3. What was the aim of his speech? (*Guide,* p. 127.) 4. What part especially angered the Pharisees? (47-50). 5. What was the charge made against Jesus in his trial before the Sanhedrin? (Mt. 59.61). 6. What was said about the face of Jesus at his transfiguration? (Mt. 17.2.) 7. Heb. 11.27 explains the secret of Stephen's fortitude and smiling face at his martyrdom: what is it? 8. When had Jesus said that he would be seen seated at the right hand of God? (Lk. 22.69) 9. Why was the stoning of Stephen unlawful? (Jn. 18.31.) 10. Contrast with Stephen's words of forgiveness, the dying prayer of the Old Testament martyr Zechariah, who was stoned. (2 Ch. 24.22.) 11. What were "these things", verse 54? 12. What was indicated by the stopping of ears? (*Guide,* p. 125.) 13. Describe the procedure at a stoning. (*Guide,* p. 125.) 14. When had Jesus spoken of death as sleep? (Jn. 11.11.) 15. What does Paul say in 2 Tim. 4.7, and 8 about the crown of the faithful? 16. What was the effect of Stephen's death? Acts 8.1-4.) 17. To the carrying out of what part of Jesus' commission to his disciples did it lead? (Acts 1.8.) 18. What did Paul say about his persecutions of the Christians in Acts 26.9-11; Gal. 1.13-23; 1 Cor. 15.9; Phil. 3.6; 1 Tim. 1.13?

Questions to Think About. 1. When did false witnesses speak against Jesus? 2. What was there illegal about the trial of Jesus? 3. What did Jesus say on the cross about his spirit? 4. What prayer did Jesus utter for the men who crucified him? 5. In what respects was the trial of Stephen like that of his Lord? (Accused of blasphemy, by false witnesses, charge similar, appealed to by high priest.) 6. In what important respect was it different? (Jesus held his peace; Stephen made a lengthy defence.) 7. Why was Stephen so successful as a preacher? 8. Could there have been a basis for the charge against him? (*Guide,* p. 127.) 9. What did he show by his recital of the history of Israel? 10. Does "cut to the heart" in verse 54 mean the same as "pricked in their heart", Acts 2.37? 11. What does "they gnashed on him with their teeth" mean? 12. What is the meaning of Stephen's vision? (*Guide,* p. 124.) 13. Why did they lay aside their garments, verse 58? (*Guide,* p. 125.) 14. What did God do for Stephen at his trial? (*Guide,* p. 125.) 15. What do we call the one who dies for Jesus? 16. Did Saul consent to Stephen's death willingly or unwillingly? 17. Was Saul's responsibility for the death of Stephen as great as that of those who threw the stones? 18. Which is worse, to do wrong yourself, or to approve of the wrongdoing of others?

Memory and Note-Book Work. Memorize Hebrews 11.1; 12.1, 2; and Tennyson's stanza given here on p. 128. Write Chapter VII, The Seven Helpers.

THE DEATH OF STEPHEN

Golden Text

Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life. Revelation 2.10

LESSON Acts 7.1-8.3; verses 7.54-8.3 printed MEMORIZE 7.59, 60

7 54 Now when they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth. 55 But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, 56 and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God. 57 But they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and rushed upon him with one accord; 58 and they cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. 59 And they stoned Stephen, calling upon *the Lord*, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. 60 And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep. 8 1 And Saul was consenting unto his death.

And there arose on that day a great persecution against the church which was in Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judæa and Samaria, except the apostles. 2 And devout men buried Stephen, and made great lamentation over him. 3 But Saul laid waste the church, entering into every house, and dragging men and women committed them to prison.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

I. Stephen a Successful Preacher, 6.8.
II. His Enemies and his Arrest, 6.9-15.
III. His Defence, 7.1-53.
IV. Its Effect on his Enemies, 7.54.
V. His Vision, 7.55-56.
VI. His Stoning, Death and Burial, 7.57-60; 8.2.
VII. Persecution of the Church, 8.1, 3.

54. *Now when they heard these things.* Read Acts 6.8-7.53.—*They were cut to the heart.* "They were not pricked to the heart with sorrow, as those were in 2.37, but cut to the heart with rage and fury" (*Matthew Henry*).—*They gnashed on him with their teeth.* "The words express the frenzy of rage, only restrained by a brute-like grinding of the teeth" (*Lindsay*).

55. *He.* Stephen.—*Being full of the Holy Spirit.* Recall earlier lessons.—*And saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God.* This was "a vision of the soul": its true meaning is seen in these words of Keble's hymn:

When persecution's torrent blaze
  Wraps the unshrinking martyr's head,
When fade all earthly flowers and bays,
  When summer friends are gone and fled,
Is he alone in that dark hour,
  Who owns the Lord of love and power?

56. *I see the heavens opened.* "The opening of the heavens" is a Jewish metaphor for insight into divine things.—*The Son of man standing on the right hand of God.* These words express the exaltation of Jesus. Recall Mt. 26.64: Henceforth ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of Power. Jesus often used the phrase "Son of man" for himself, but it is never used by others save here and in Rev. 1.13 and 14.14. It is quoted in Heb. 2.6.

SAUL WITNESSING THE STONING OF STEPHEN

From a Painting by N. H. J. Westlake

57. *They cried out with a loud voice.* To drown his words for themselves and to arouse the rest to violent action.—*And stopped their ears.* By this motion they would represent that Stephen's words were "blasphemous", even as Caiaphas had rent his clothes when Jesus said, Hereafter you shall see the Son of man coming in glory.

58. *They cast him out of the city, and stoned him.* They treated him as a blasphemer. The law of Lev. 24.14-16 reads, He that blasphemeth the name of the Lord shall surely be put to death, all the congregation shall certainly stone him. See 1 Ki. 21.13.—*The witnesses.* The witnesses against him, Acts 6.13, were according to the law (Dt. 17.7), the leaders in his death.—*Laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul.* Their flowing upper garments were in their way, and they were laid aside. This is the first mention of Saul who became Paul. He was a Jew, a son of well-to-do parents of Tarsus in Cilicia, Asia Minor, a Roman citizen by birth, a tent-maker by trade, a Pharisee trained in the rabbinical school of Gamaliel at Jerusalem.

59. *The Lord.* Jesus.—*Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.* On the cross Jesus had said, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." "Stephen's calm commital of his spirit to his Lord, is so palpably inconsistent with the doctrine of the state of purgatory, or sleep, between death and the judgment, that Roman Catholic theology exempts all martyrs from purgatorial discipline" (*Abbott*).

60. *Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.* Jesus on the cross had said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." When an infidel asked Dr. Parker, "What did God do for Stephen?" meaning that if God existed he would have rescued him, Dr. Parker answered: "What did God do for him? In that moment of suffering and helplessness God enabled Stephen to say 'Lord, lay not this sin to their charge'. That was what the Almighty did, and in working this miracle of forgiveness in the spirit of the martyred man, God did more for Stephen than if he had sent a legion of angels to protect him from the ruffianism which wrought his death".—*He fell asleep.* A beautiful expression for "he died". Our word *cemetery* comes from the Greek κοιμητήριον, which means *sleeping-place.* "To go out of life because we must is misery; to go out because our wills accept the necessity, is triumph and victory. The one is death indeed, the other is the opening of the spirit to the influx of a larger life. Blessed is he who at that last hour goes willingly, because he knows that he goes after his Lord, recognizing that the grave, too, is a place whither the Forerunner for us is entered. He is Heaven, and Heaven is he. Stephen knew very little of what he was to meet beyond this earth, but he knew whom he was to meet, and that was enough for him" (*Maclaren*).

1. *Saul was consenting unto his death.* The Greek word συνευδοκῶν means he was consenting to it with pleasure. He did not throw the stones himself, but he rejoiced to see others throwing them. See Paul's words in Acts 22.20; Gal. 1.13.—*There arose on that day a great persecution against the Church.* "Stephen's martyrdom acted like the first taste of blood on a wild beast" (*Calvin*). Now began a new era for the Church.—*Judæa.* The word here probably includes Galilee and Perea.—"God's loyal, loving law is, Move on! And if we will not move on, he in love must shove us on. It was only when the fixed-in-one-spot saints at Jerusalem proposed to dispense the Gospel elixir from headquarters only that God permitted the rod of persecution to scatter them. Then, we read (verse 4), the disciples went everywhere preaching the word" (*Dan Crawford*).—*Except the apostles.* "Perhaps their known orthodoxy as regards temple-worship may have helped to shelter them, in contrast to Stephen's Hellenist fellow-believers, who probably felt the brunt of the attack. See Acts 11.19" (*Bartlett*).

3. *But Saul laid waste the church.....prison.* Compare Saul's own painful confessions in Acts 26.9-11; Gal. 1.13-23; 1 Cor. 15.9; Phil. 3.6; 1 Tim. 1.13. Saul the persecutor was a Pharisee, and in his persecution of the Christian Church he was continuing the persecution which the Pharisaic party waged against Christ.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

58. *They cast him out of the city and stoned him.* Stoning was the customary Jewish mode of inflicting the death penalty, but under the Roman rule only the Roman procurator had the right to put any one to death (John 18.31).

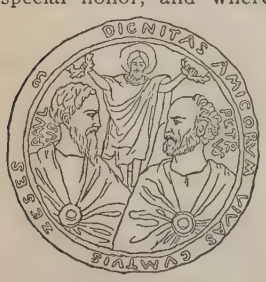
The stoning always took place outside the city, and according to Leviticus 24.14 the witnesses who testified against the accused must cast the first stones, after having first placed their hands on his head to signify that he was bearing his own guilt. (Compare the custom in the case of the scapegoat on the Day of Atonement, Lev. 16.21, 22.)

According to Lightfoot a man was stationed at the door of the Sanhedrin to wave a handkerchief should a belated witness come to testify in behalf of the accused, and there was a horseman stationed as far off as he could see the handkerchief whose duty it was to call back the procession when the handkerchief was waved. A crier went before the condemned one announcing his crime, and at the place of execution the latter was asked to confess his crime to God. The Sanhedrin may have legally put to vote the question of sentencing Stephen for though they and the people with them became a mob intent only on Stephen's death, part, at least, of the requirements seem to have been carried out. The witnesses laid aside their flowing outer garments in order that they might cast their stones, and it may have been when asked to confess that Stephen had the opportunity of kneeling down and praying.

The method of procedure is thus described in the Talmud: After a man has been condemned to be stoned, they bring him good strong wine, and give him to drink, that he may not feel too great horror of a violent death. Then come the witnesses, and bind his hands and feet, and lead him to the place of stoning. Then the witnesses take a great stone, large enough to cause death, and lay it upon his heart all together, lest one should act before another, according to Dt. 17.7, "the hand of the witnesses shall be first against him"; then all the Israelites can overwhelm him with stones.

58. *A young man named Saul.* According to Greek custom, a man could be called young until he was forty years of age.

60. *He fell asleep.* From very early times the Church held its martyrs in special honor, and where they could they erected chapels over their tombs. When they observed the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper they were wont to recite the names of the martyrs after thanking God "for those who had departed this life in his faith and fear". The day on which a martyr died was celebrated as his birthday. "St. Stephen's Birthday" they called the day of the stoning, for, said they, was it not for him a birth into a better life?



A Representation of Christ Presenting the Crown of Life to Peter and Paul Found on the Bottom of a Glass Cup in the Catacombs

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. How many chapters of Acts have we now studied? About how many years have passed since the Ascension? What was Jesus' last command to his disciples? To what city had the disciples confined their witnessing so far? What was the result of the witnessing on the Day of Pentecost? In Solomon's Porch? What was the last report of the growth of the Church? What two troubles had arisen within the Church? How was each settled? What persecutions had befallen the apostles? What had aroused the hostility of the Sadducees? To what preaching had they objected? Why?

Who was Stephen? How did he become one of The Seven? What were his duties? What sort of man was he? What further power was given him? What other people have we been told were filled with the Holy Spirit? What does this mean?

In one of our last year's lessons an innocent man was stoned to death: who was he and why was he killed? (Naboth.) What did we hear last year about a man named Saul?

The Beginning of the Enmity of the Pharisees. The last verse of our last lesson describes the culmination of the outward prosperity of the early church: And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem exceedingly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith. With today's lesson we enter upon the study of the long series of perse-

cutions that followed. In Dean Alford's words: "As yet all seemed going on prosperously for the conversion of Israel. The multitude honored the apostles; the advice of Gamaliel had moderated the opposition of the Sanhedrin; the priests were gradually being won over. But God's designs were different. At this period another and important element in the testimony of the church is brought out in the person of Stephen—its protest against Pharisaism. This arrays against it that powerful and jealous sect, and henceforth it finds neither favor nor tolerance with either of the parties among the Jews, but the increasing and bitter enmity of both". Before Stephen's public work, the opposition to the disciples had come from the Sadducees and had not been violent. Stephen's defence shows that Jesus had taught a spiritual worship which made the Law obsolete, that Jesus had taken the place of the temple and the sacrifices and the priesthood, because he himself was the atonement for sin, the way unto God. This it was which aroused the wrath of the Pharisees.

Stephen the First Christian Martyr. How little and yet how much we know about Stephen! He was of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit. And Stephen, full of grace and power, wrought great wonders and signs among the people.

Grecian Jews from Italy and Africa and Asia Minor disputed with Stephen in their synagogues, and when they were baffled in their attempt to withstand his arguments they had recourse to treachery. Secretly they induced men to agree to witness against him, and by misrepresenting his teaching they stirred up the people and the elders and the scribes. When they had thus secured the fickle popular favor, they seized Stephen and brought him to trial before the Sanhedrin. The false witnesses declared that they had heard him speak against that holy place, the temple, saying that Jesus of Nazareth should destroy it, and against the laws delivered by Moses, that Jesus should change them.

"Are these things so?" questioned the high priest. Stephen had no doubt declared that God could be worshipped elsewhere than in the temple, and that the law should pass away in the sense of being perfectly fulfilled in Christ. The injustice of the accusation made his eyes flash fire, and those who looked saw "God's glory smite him on the face". Stephen's defence has been compared with the apology of Socrates: both were delivered, not with the object of gaining an acquittal, but of testifying openly to the truth, and of denouncing the blindness and injustice of the judges. "Brethren and fathers, hearken," he began, and then he rehearsed the ancient history of Israel, God's dealings with Abraham and Joseph and Moses and the Children of Israel in the wilderness and David and Solomon. His hearers listened at first without realizing the drift of his words, but when it gradually dawned upon them that he was skillfully showing that God's revelation to his people had been a progressive one, that their fathers had always been rebellious, first rejecting God's messages and afterwards accepting them; that Moses and the prophets had predicted the coming of a greater prophet than themselves, and that he, in following Jesus, was obeying Moses and the Law, while they, his adversaries, were breaking the Law; and that religion was a spiritual religion, that God did not need an earthly temple, as a quotation from Isaiah proved; when they grasped all this, their anger knew no bounds. Stephen saw that if he would apply his words to his audience he must do so quickly. Boldly and forcibly he drew his lesson: "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcized in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do ye, ye who received the law as it was ordained by angels, and kept it not."

Stephen's audience gnashed their teeth in their fury, but Stephen looking calmly upward was no longer in the council-chamber: "Behold," he declared, "I see the heavens opened and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God". What blasphemy was this! He whom they had crucified was exalted to power! Stopping their ears, the infuriated mob rushed upon him and dragged him without the city. To slay him in the city, to kill him by any other means than by stoning, or to hurl their stones before the legal witnesses had first cast theirs, would be to violate the laws of Moses. These laws they were careful to keep, but they cared not in their rage for the Roman law which took from them the power to execute the death penalty. The stones flew swift and sure on their deadly mission. "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," cried Stephen,

and then he added, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge". He fell asleep, and devout men buried him.

The End of the Jerusalem Period of Witnessing. The martyrdom of Stephen is assigned to 36 or 37 A. D. The fact that he was stoned to death by the people although the procurator only could legally inflict the death penalty, has suggested that this must have been the time, for then Pilate had been deposed and another procurator had not been appointed. The death of Stephen was the beginning of a persecution which scattered the disciples, driving them throughout Judea and Samaria.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The charge against Stephen and his defence were made at the regular meeting-place of the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem, and then he was hurried outside the city walls to "the place of stoning". According to rabbinical tradition, the place was north of the city outside the modern Damascus Gate (formerly called St. Stephen's Gate), the hill now known as "the new Calvary", the most probable site of the crucifixion of Christ, Another site east of the city is also shown to visitors as the place of stoning, outside the gate now called in honor of the martyr, St. Stephen's Gate, near the brook Kidron.

The Libertines, mentioned in verse 9, were probably Jews or their descendants who had been taken to Italy by Pompey as slaves and afterwards received their liberty and were allotted a section in Rome for their residence. There is still in Rome a ghetto, or Jewish quarter, where only Jews live. In 19 A. D. a decree of Tiberius banished them to Sardinia, and many returned to Jerusalem.

Find Cyrene and Alexander, cities of northern Africa, and Cilicia and Asia, provinces of Asia Minor, on the large colored map.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Saul the Persecutor showed the same steadfast, persistent, unrelenting qualities which were so admirable in Paul the Apostle. Some one has suggested that when he was a boy he must have given a great deal of trouble. Certainly he must have been an unyielding youth—his teachers may have called him obstinate. But think what he became! It may be that you have such a youth in your class, of whom you have almost despaired. It is worth any amount of trouble on your part to enlist his "obstinacy" in the cause of righteousness.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. A few years ago there was a strike declared among the coal miners of Belgium. Mr. Banescote, the Superintendent, was urged by his friends not to go to the mines, but he answered simply, "I am a Christian; nothing can make me afraid". He had done much for those miners, and had always treated them as friends. But one of the miners shot at him behind his back, and for three days he lay in great suffering. During all those long hours of agony not one word of bitterness or hatred or revengeful feeling passed his lips, and when he was dying his last words were, "Father, forgive them".

What were Jesus' words as he was nailed to the cross? Today we learn about another faithful follower of Jesus who also could forgive the enemies who caused his death. Who was he? What did we learn about him last week?

For Older Pupils. Begin with the Review Questions, p. 126.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I The Secret of the Shining Face

A Reflected Light. And all that sat in the council, fastening their eyes on Stephen, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel. His thoughts were filled with "the God of Glory"—no wonder that his face shone! Beautifully Tennyson's verse expresses the source of that divine radiance on his face:—

He heeded not reviling tones,
Nor sold his heart to idle moans,
Tho' cursed, and scorn'd and bruised with stones.
But looking upward, full of grace,
He prayed, and from a happy place
God's glory smote him on the face.

After Moses had communed with God on the Mount, his face shone with so bright a glory, we are told, that until the brightness began to fade away men could not look upon him.

When Jesus was praying on the "Mount of Tranfiguration", "the fashion of his countenance was altered", and Peter and James and John saw "his glory". Doctor Maclaren, in commenting on the transfigured face of Christ, says: "That altered fashion of countenance may stand as a symbol of the power of communion with God to breathe new beauty into our earthly life, and we, too, may have 'the glory of God' reflected on our faces as on Stephen's, if we steadfastly look up into Heaven. Only in his case, and in ours, the glory is reflected from above, and in Christ's case it came from within. Let us keep near him in the secret place that our faces may shine with reflected luster, and then come down into the camp to let our light so shine that men may glorify the Uncreated Light at which it was kindled".

The Joy of Service. Dr. J. W. Dawson tells of his meeting with a man from the forests of Wisconsin and drawing from him the story of his life as a "lumber-jack". "He told how he first won their respect by sharing their toil; how by tact and kindness he got a hearing for his Master; how he traveled scores of miles through the winter snows to nurse dying men, wrecked by wild excesses; how he had heard the confessions of thieves and murderers, who had fled from justice to the refuge of the forest; how he had stood pale and apprehensive of violence in an angry drunken mob, and had quelled their rage by singing to them 'Anywhere with Jesus'; how, finally, he had fallen ill, and had hoped in his extreme weariness for the great release, but had come back from the gates of death with a new hope for the success of his work; and as he spoke, that light which fell upon the face of the dying Stephen, rested also on his face, for he saw, and made me see, the heavens opened, and Jesus standing at the right hand of the throne of God."

Two Other Shining Faces. A report in the *Sunday School Chronicle* of an address by Colonel MacGregor includes these two incidents which strikingly attest the secret of two other shining faces. Going round among the wounded one day at the close of a battle—and there were three hundred injured men—Colonel MacGregor came across a poor fellow who had had his right leg and hip shattered by a cannon ball. He lay covered with blood and racked with pain. Passing the man, the colonel remarked, "Your best friend could do nothing more for you now." The man raised his eyes to the speaker, and his face brightened as he murmured, "I think he can, sir". "Who?" asked the officer. "The Lord Jesus Christ," whispered the dying soldier. The lump came into the throat of the colonel as he heard the name for the first time on that battle field. He sat down by the side of the man, and asked him if he knew Jesus Christ. "I thank God I do," was the reply, and on the face of the man, covered as it was with blood, there came the look of perfect peace.

The other incident took place in the last Boer war. Private Stubb, of the Sixtieth Rifles, was known to be a Christian and a good, moral man. He had been in two encounters with the enemy in the early part of the campaign, and in a third terrible engagement, in which five hundred men were killed, he was lying down upon the veldt, firing. Suddenly he jumped up on his knees and put his hands to his throat, for a shot had severed the jugular vein, and the blood was pouring forth in a thick stream. His two comrades stopped firing to see how John Stubb, Christian, would meet death. Three days later one of the men reported the incident to the Colonel. Still holding his throat, Private Stubbs looked up to the sky and said, "Here comes Jesus to take me home," and he sank back with a smile, and died. "I believe," said the colonel, "that that man saw Christ as plainly as did Stephen on the day of his martyrdom".

II The Martyr Spirit

The First Christian Martyrs. Who is a martyr? One who has been put to death for his faith, you answer. That is the meaning of the word as it is now used, but originally it meant only a witness. The Greek word μαρτυρ, from which it is derived, is used for *witness* throughout Acts. Only in one instance is it translated martyr in the Authorized Version: in Acts 22.20 Paul says, "And when the blood of the martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting unto his death". In the Revised Version the original word is re-

stored, and it reads, Stephen thy witness. Because witnessing to the truth was so generally attended by persecution, a witness or martyr was one who suffered for the cause he loved, and early writers applied the word to those who were persecuted unto death. In this sense Stephen was the first Christian martyr. "The cup that I drink ye must drink; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized", Jesus had said to his followers. The first one to fulfill his words was Stephen. Ere long he was followed by a multitude of other Christian martyrs. In fact, the early Christians under the Roman persecution endured the most dreadful tortures gladly, counting it joy to suffer because their Lord had suffered. They had not the slightest fear of death, they coveted the martyr's crown. The Roman rulers, Trajan and Marcus Aurelius, who had sought to put an end to Christianity by putting men to death, found that, instead of causing others to retract it only made them the more zealous Christians, and, as Tertullion observed, the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the Church.

Modern Martyrs. About ten years ago four missionaries were murdered in Lienchou, China. Two of them were young student volunteers, Mr. and Mrs. Peale, who had reached the mission station only the night before. The plan of the Missionary Board had been to send them to Yeung-Kong, and Mr. Kunkle, another young student, to Lienchou, but as Mr. Kunkle received a fellowship in England and decided to give another year to his studies, the Board, thinking the station at Lienchou the more urgent, sent Mr. and Mrs. Peale there in his stead. Do you think that when the terrible news of what would have been his own fate reached Mr. Kunkle, he would still be willing to go to China? These are the words he wrote to the Board as soon as he learned what had happened: "I cannot help thinking that had I been more faithful, it would have been I that had gained a martyr's crown, and a better than I spared for the work. Now I earnestly seek the privilege of taking the place of the martyred Peale, and if in your judgment this sad event and the increased need justify my leaving my studies and proceeding at once to China, I am ready to sail."

III A Fresh Unfolding of God's Will

They that were Scattered Abroad Went Everywhere Preaching the Word. The distribution of plants is to the scientist a most engrossing study; how the wind, tides, and birds carry the seed to widely-sundered shores is a veritable romance. Even more mysterious are the manifold ways by which the knowledge of Christ has been diffused throughout the nations.

It took root in the red streets of Jerusalem; it sprang as by magic in the fields of Samaria; it blossomed like a rose in the desert in the Ethiopian chamberlain; its first-fruits were gathered in Asia, and directly harvested in Europe.

Gardeners often have a piece of spare ground which they use for the trial of seedlings. Let us put to proof the gracious truths of revelation in our own heart and experience; and then, having proved how precious and beautiful they are, let us become sowers of the germs of life, scattering them by tongue, pen, influence wherever we go. *Dr. W. L. Watkinson.*

A Persecution a Blessing. Among the stories printed by the Continent concerning the Conspiracy Trial persecution days in Korea, there is one about a young Korean student back from Waseda University, Tokio. He was put in a cell by himself and chafed under the restraint, which kept him from preaching to his fellow-prisoners as others were doing. Then he was banished to an island, and "just think" said he radiantly to a friend later, "I was mourning because I could not preach in jail. Then God sent me off to an unevangelized island where there was plenty of work to do for him, and Japan paid the fare."

Good that Came from Evil. In 1859 a converted Jew was sent by the Episcopal Church of America to Shanghai as a missionary, and about twenty years later he was made Bishop of Shanghai. Six years afterwards he became paralyzed, and had to give up his episcopal jurisdiction. Till 1906 he lived almost helpless, but the use of the middle finger of each hand was left him, and with these he wrote on a typewriter a translation of the Old Testament into the Mandarin language, the chief Chinese dialect, and then the whole Bible into Easy Wenli, the more popular form of their written language. Dr. Scheres-chewsky was especially fitted for this work, because as a young man he had been educated in "all the wisdom of the Jews". Two hundred and fifty mil-

lion Mandarin-speaking Chinese have been enabled by his labors to read the word of God. How much vaster a work he accomplished thus, than he could have accomplished in his duties as a bishop!

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

"Beautiful thoughts make a beautiful soul,
And a beautiful soul makes a beautiful face."

Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life. No one who had not lived loftily could die so triumphantly as Stephen. Let us take to ourselves these words of an ancient writer: Let us not see in vain the crowns at the race's end, and sit down in the shades of ease. But let us stretch out ourselves, and pursue to the mark, for the glorious prize that is set before us. Still with our utmost speed let us follow them, whose travels ended in so sweet a rest.

Some one has said that

'Tis as hard at duty's call
To lay one's life down day by day
As to lay it down once for all.

To lay one's life down in these unheralded ways is the opportunity of all. On the ordinary levels of ordinary days our way may be as heroic as on the extraordinary heights of extraordinary opportunities which come but seldom.

Our Prayer.

When on my day of life the night is falling,
And, in the winds from unsunned spaces blown,
I hear far voices out of darkness calling
My feet to paths unknown,

Thou who hast made my home of life so pleasant.
Leave not its tenant when its walls decay;
O Love Divine, O Helper ever present,
Be thou my strength and stay. *Whittier.*

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The probable effect of Stephen's trial upon Paul. See Dr. Lyman Abbott's "Life and Letters of Paul" pages 32-34.

2. Lynch law. See article by J. E. Cutler in the *Outlook* for Feb. 2, 1907.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. Read through the entire book of Hebrews. 2. Read carefully Hebrews 3, called "the Psalm of Faith". 3. Read carefully the 11th chapter of Hebrews. 4. Make a list of the heroes named in that chapter and opposite each one write for what act of faith he is immortalized. 5. What Bible heroes stopped the mouths of lions? (Judges 14.5, 6; 1 S. 17.34, 35; Dan. 6.16-23.) 6. What heroes quenched the power of fire? (Dan. 3.17-27.) 7. What light is thrown upon the meaning of the Greek word translated "assurance" from the discovery of ancient business documents? (*Guide,* p. 134.) 8. Study the Epistle to the Hebrews. (*Guide,* pp. 42-44.)

Questions to Think About. 1. What is the force of the question in verse 32? 2. What is the meaning of "seeing we are compassed about by so great a cloud of witnesses"? (*Guide,* p. 133.) 3. What is the meaning of the metaphor in 12.1? 4. What is "a weight and the sin that doth so easily beset us"? (*Guide,* p. 134.) 5. What is a hero? 6. Name some heroes of war fame. 7. Name some heroes of philanthropy. 8. What is a hero of faith? 9. Name some heroes of faith. 10. What Bible character is your hero of faith? Why? 11. Who is the supreme example of faith? 12. How was he a martyr?

Note-Book Work. Write Chapter VIII, The Witnessing and Martyrdom of Stephen.

HEROES AND MARTYRS OF FAITH

Golden Text

Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith. Hebrews 12.1, 2

LESSON Hebrews 11.1-12.2: verses 11.1 32-12.2 printed. MEMORIZE verses 12.1, 2

11 1 Now faith is assurance of *things* hoped for, a conviction of things not seen.
32 And what shall I more say? for the time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah; of David and Samuel and the prophets: 33 who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, 34 quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, waxed mighty in war, turned to flight armies of aliens. 35 Women received their dead by a resurrection: and others were tortured, not accepting their deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: 36 and others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: 37 they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, they were tempted, they were slain with the sword: they went about in sheep-skins, in goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated 38 (of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves, and the holes of the earth. 39 And these all, having had witness borne to them through their faith, received not the promise, 40 God having provided some better thing concerning us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.
12 1 Therefore let us also, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2 looking unto Jesus the author and perfecter of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising shame, and hath sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

I. The Nature of Faith, 11.1.
II. The Earliest Heroes of Faith, 11.2-31.
III. Later Heroes of Faith, 11.32-40.
IV. Let us also Run Well, Looking to Jesus, the Supreme Example of Faith, 12.1, 2.

1. *Assurance of.* The giving substance to, RVm. The Greek word ὑπόστασις, translated *substance* in the A. V. and *assurance* in the R. V., means literally, *a standing under, that which is a foundation for something to stand on.* It is a word used for "title-deed" (see Light from Oriental Life), and the sentence may be translated "Faith is the title-deed to things hoped for"—a beautiful figure expressing the thought that we are heirs to vast spiritual estates, and faith is the title-deed which puts us in possession of them.—*Conviction.* Test, RVm. "Faith demonstrates to the eye of the mind the reality of those things that cannot be discerned by the eye of the body" (*Matthew Henry*).—*Things not seen.* "Infidelity is practical faith in things seen and unfaith in things unseen" (*Van Dyke*). A suggestive translation is this: Faith gives a reality to things hoped for, and puts to the test things for the present unseen.

32. *And what shall I more say?* What is the use of giving additional names. —*For the time would fail me.* It is impossible to give an exhaustive list of the notable acts of faith recorded in Scripture.—*Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jeph-*

thah. These are four of the judges of Israel, whose lives we studied last year. For Gideon see Judges 6; for Barak, Judges 4; for Samson, Judges 13-16; for Jephthah, Judges 11.—*David.* The warrior king.—*Samuel.* The last of the judges and first of the prophets.

33. *Who through faith.* "It is not what men have done by the sword that counts in the esteem of heaven; such deeds mean little or nothing—it is what they have done 'by faith'. Weak, frail men and women have put their faith in God, and have done the impossible! Faith unites the weakling with almightiness" (*Jowett*).—*Subdued kingdom.* As David did.—*Obtained promises.* See Heb. 6.15.—*Stopped the mouths of lions.* As did Samson, Judges 14.5, 6; and David, 1 S. 17.34, 35; and Daniel, Dan. 6.16-23.

34. *Quenched the power of fire.* As did the three friends of Daniel, Dan. 3.17-27.—*They escaped the edge of the sword.* So David escaped the sword of Goliath and of Saul.

35. *Women received their dead by a resurrection.* So did the widow of Zarephath, 1 K. 17.8-24; and the Shunamite, 2 K. 4.18-37.—*By a resurrection* is a literal translation. (Raised to life again, A. V.) in contrast with *a better resurrection* at the end of the verse, the latter meaning that they attained to eternal life, a life which would not, like the former, again meet death.—*Others were tortured, not accepting their deliverance. "Were broken on the wheel* is the literal meaning. The reference is to the narrative in 2 Maccabees, 6.18-31, where we read of Eleazar, who at the age of ninety was tortured and to chapter 7, which narrates the horrible martyrdom of the seven brethren and their mother. The words 'not accepting their deliverance' may be illustrated from both narratives" (*A. S. Peake*).

36. *Mockings and scourgings.* The phrase is best illustrated from the narratives of Eleazar and the seven brethren (*Peake*).—*Bonds and imprisonment.* Another phrase with several examples, perhaps Jeremiah was specially in his mind (*Peake*).

37-38. *They were stoned.* As was Zechariah, 2 Ch. 24.20, 21, and as Jeremiah is said to have been.—*They were sawn asunder.* As was Isaiah, according to tradition.—*They were tempted.* To apostasy.—*They were slain with the sword.* As were the prophets in the time of Ahab (1 K. 19.19), and Uriah in the time of Jehoiakim (Jer. 26.20-23).—*They went about in sheepskins, in goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated.* "In these words and in verse 38 the Maccabæan persecutions are probably referred to, when the faithful Jews were driven into the deserts and the mountains, and were compelled to take refuge in caves, and holes of the earth" (*Peake*).

39. *These all.* All these heroes of faith.—*Having had witness borne to them through their faith.* Compare verse 2. What they did and endured through their faith was a sign of divine approval.—*Received not the promise.* "This has been said already of the Patriarchs (verse 13); now it is extended to all the faithful of the Old Covenant. The author boldly admits that their faith did not receive its reward. But instead of arguing, faith is of no value since it gives nothing more substantial than a certification of character, he argues, hold fast to your faith; they have been kept waiting for your sake, they will not receive their full salvation before you. Faith will bring them the reward, which is only deferred, so faith will secure yours, and with very brief delay (10.37). The 'promise' is that of the blessings of the Messianic salvation in the better country, verse 16" (*Peake*).

40. *Some better thing concerning us.* "We do not receive a better salvation than the faithful of the Old Covenant, but our case is better, since we live after the great work of redemption has been achieved" (*Peake*).—*That apart from us they should not be made perfect.* All the faithful are to be perfected together. "This passage teaches the solidarity of humanity in its work as well as in itself. The man of the present requires the work and suffering and achievement of the men of the past to complete him and his work. The future men will, in like manner, require the work and suffering and achievement of the men of to-day to complete them. The whole creation, in all its successive æons, moves together toward 'the one far-off, divine event'" (*Vincent*).

12.1. *Seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses. "Witnesses* does not mean *spectators,* but those who have borne witness to the truth, as those enumerated in Chapter XI. Yet the idea of spectators is implied, and

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is really the principal idea. The writer's picture is that of an arena in which the Christians whom he addresses are contending in a race, while the vast host of the heroes of faith who, after having borne witness to the truth, have entered into their heavenly rest, watch the contest from the encircling tiers of the arena, compassing and overhanging it like a cloud, filled with lively interest and sympathy, and lending heavenly aid" (*Vincent*).—*Lay aside every weight.* Encumbrance, anything that hinders in Christian living. "The word *weight* is used of the superfluous flesh which an athlete has to reduce by training. This suits the metaphor of the race. The Christian must put himself under strict moral discipline to bring himself into fit condition for running his race. Compare 1 Cor. 9.24-27" (*Peake.*)—*And the sin which doth so easily beset us.* The last six words translate one Greek word εὐπερίστατον, and the translation given in the AVm is: *doth closely cling to us.* "It is sin in general that is meant. Sin clings about the runner of the heavenly race like a long, close-fitting robe, impeding his every movement or even tripping him up."

2. *Looking unto.* The Greek word ἀφορῶντες, here translated *looking,* means *staring,* gazing with wide-opened eyes. It is used of an artist studying his model. Jesus, not the "cloud of witnesses", is the supreme Example of patient endurance, of faithful running of life's race, and on him we must fix our eyes, his life we must study, and that vision and that study will inspire faith and compel obedience.—*For the joy that was set before him.* For the reward awaiting him (Heb. 11.26) is the common interpretation. Mr. Oswald's interpretation is better: "It is the nobility of self-sacrifice, the thought of the misery of sufferers ended, and their happiness and safety won, that flash on a heroic soul and fire it by their moral appeal. And that was 'the joy set before him'. It was not the issue of the act, but the act itself, that was a joy to him. The joy lay not in the distant victory, but in the splendor of the present and pressing sacrifice. He rejoiced not in the hope of future good, but in the loveliness of present love. The root of his action was not calculation, but inspiration. So Man of Sorrows as he was, more deeply and more essentially he was a Man of Joy."

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

1. *Faith is the assurance of things hoped for.* "If we could only discover a large number of business documents and ordinary correspondence which were written at the time when the New Testament was being written, we might come to quite a new and rich interpretation of many of the New Testament words", wrote Bishop Lightfoot. He did not live to see his wish fulfilled, but fulfilled it has been in a wonderful degree. Letters and business documents in great quantities have been found that were written at the time Paul was writing his letters. One of the words which has from them gained a rich interpretation is the Greek word ὑπόστασις, translated *substance,* or *assurance* in our Bibles. In business documents of this period it is used for "title-deed". Just as they gave title-deeds for the possession of houses in those days, so the writer of Hebrews says faith is a title-deed to the possession of things hoped for.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. Recall our last year's lessons and answer these questions: What judge stopped the mouth of a lion? What king subdued kingdoms? How did David escape from the sword of Goliath? From the sword of Saul? What deeds of faith did Gideon perform? Who was Barak and what did he do? Who was Jephthah and what did he do? What can you tell about Samuel? Who were some of the prophets of last year's course? What women had their dead raised up?

The Epistle to the Hebrews. See pages 42-44 of our Introduction.

How Faith Makes Heroes. Stephen was a great hero of faith, the first Christian martyr to his faith. Our Lesson Committee has followed the account of his heroism and martyrdom with the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, that famous chapter on faith which recounts the great heroes and martyrs of faith of the Old Covenant. The writer of Hebrews is recalling the great heroes of faith in Israel's glorious past, and holding them up as noble examples; as great as was their faith in the old dispensation, must be the faith of the Hebrews in the new, for without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto God.

The chapter begins with a definition of faith. Faith is the confident assurance that the Great Unseen is back of the things that are seen, and that he is able and willing to redeem his promises—the things hoped for. Faith was the characteristic of the Hebrew forefathers. The belief that the worlds have been formed by the word of God is faith. And then follows a list of great men who believed God, trusted that he would fulfil his promises, and lived in accordance with this trust, their lives illustrations of the definition of faith. The list begins with Abel and Enoch and Noah. Then comes Abraham, the friend of God who journeyed to the land of promise, not knowing whither he was going, only believing that he was obeying God's will, and who was willing to sacrifice Isaac although the command seemed to conflict with the promise of a great posterity, for his faith led him to believe that God is able to raise from the dead. Isaac's blessing of Jacob and Esau, Jacob's blessing of the sons of Joseph, and Joseph's commandment that his bones should be taken away by the children of Israel when the time came for them to leave Egypt, were all acts of faith, being actuated by trust in God's overruling. Faith led the parents of Moses to disobey the king's command and hide him for three months, and when Moses was grown up faith led him to choose aright between a life of pleasure and ease at Pharaoh's court and of ill-treatment with the people of God, prefering to give up present good for future gain. Faith led him to leave Egypt, despising the king's wrath, to endure, to keep the passover, to lead the children of God through the Red sea as by dry land.

The chapter closes with yet other instances of known and unknown heroes who endured all things as seeing him who is invisible.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

How Paul's definition of faith applies to a teacher's attitude toward his class at some period or other of his teaching—an assurance of things hoped for, a conviction of things not seen! It is teachers who have had such assurance and conviction, who have seen in their pupils more than was evident to most beholders, and looking beyond the carelessness and thoughtlessness and even, it may be, the actual evil in their lives, have seen the noble characters into which they might grow, who have persevered and won. Never lose faith in your pupils, never falter in your belief that their souls are soil adapted to the seed you are trying to sow.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Where is Peru? Admiral Grau was Peru's greatest naval hero. When they have a naval review in Peru, and call the roll, they honor his memory by calling his name first. An orderly then steps forward and pointing upward answers, "Absent but accounted for. He is with the heroes." The Eleventh Chapter of Hebrews is commonly called the roll-call of heroes. They are absent, but accounted for. What kind of heroes does our lesson title call them? Who are some of the men and women of the Old Testament about whom we studied last year, whose names you would expect to find on this roll-call?

For Older Pupils. Carlyle tells us that biography is the most universally pleasant, and the most universally profitable of all reading. We have read the biographies of the Bible to little profit if we have not learned from them the possibility and the duty and the blessing of great faith in God. Name some of the great heroes of faith in the Old Testament whose biographies we studied last year. Who are the great heroes of faith of the New Testament?

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I What is Faith?

A Fine Illustration of Faith. A doctor and a merchant had been having a serious talk one day, and the doctor asked his friend "What is faith"? The merchant did not answer, but called to him his eight-year-old son who was having a fine time playing with some tin soldiers. "Karl", he said, "pack up your soldiers as quickly as you can and go to bed. I think it is better that you should do so". The boy was astonished at so strange an order, and

grieved at leaving his new toys, but after giving his father a long, beseeching look and seeing that his father was determined, he pressed back his tears, said not a word, but gave him a warm kiss and hurried away. "There, Doctor, that is faith", said the father. Then he called the boy back and whispered into his ear, "And when you bring me another school certificate as good as the last, I will take you on a visit to Hamburg when vacation comes". The boy shouted for joy, and for a long time they still heard from his bedroom his jubilant cries. "There, Doctor, that was faith", again said the merchant. "That boy has the stuff in him to be a man of faith. If he acts toward God as he acted toward me, as trustfully and as obediently, he will have faith". "I think I understand the matter better now than I would have done from a sermon", answered his friend.

This is the story which Dr. Martin Luther gives in his "Little Catechisms" as a definition of faith, and it is a fine illustration of the way in which the writer of the eleventh chapter of Hebrews defined it, too. He begins by saying that faith is assurance of things hoped for, and then gives a long list of men and women who showed by their lives that they had such faith. Karl had assurance of things hoped for, he was sure of the hoped-for visit to Hamburg because he had faith in his father's promises. He could not understand why he should give up his play and go to bed in the daytime, but he had perfect faith in his father's wisdom and he obeyed without a murmur. So, too, these Old Testament heroes of faith had faith in their heavenly Father's promises, and obeyed his commands even though they could not understand why they were given.

Dr. Jowett's Definition of Faith. What is faith? The first essential in all faith is a certain acquaintance of the mind, a certain direction of thought. It must begin there. The first step in all faith is the lifting up of the eyes upon Christ. You have the primary element of faith in the first two lines of that very exquisite hymn of Ray Palmer's:

My faith looks up to thee,
Thou Lamb of Calvary.

The second element of faith, is an action of the will. What I mean is this: faith is never merely a thought, never only a reverie, never merely a contemplation; faith is always an action. Faith is not merely a look, it is a walk; it is not merely a wish, it is a will.

When I have my mind set on my great Companion, and my will set in obedience, there grows a mystic intercourse with the Lord. It is almost too mysterious for the clumsy explanation of words to express. But, look you, when my mind is on the Lord, my will set to do his will, there is an openness between me and my Lord, like the openness between two friends, two lovers, like husband and wife, in an ineffably greater degree. Between me and the Lord there is a ceaseless interpassage of glorious converse. I give him my aspirations, he gives me his inspiration; I give him looks, he gives me blessing; all the day long two open doors, my Lord's open, mine open, the two in blessed intercourse: "If any man will open his door, I will come in and sup with him and he with me". These are my three working conceptions of faith.

Dr. Jowett's List of Things Hoped For. If you have faith like that, in your hands you have the keep of your soul. Precious title-deeds! And these title-deeds will give you possession of things hoped for. What kind of things hoped for?

I will tell you what I put down as the thing I would hope for in Christ Jesus. I hope for the complete spiritual emancipation of all my powers. I want my life to be like a great estate without a single yard lying useless or waste. I want to keep all my possessions under mastery. I want my social affinities to be rare and acute and fine. I want my perception of God to be as familiar as of my friends, I want my life to be as clear and pellucid as a fountain spring. I want my light to be a clear and smokeless flame. I want every part within me to be brought into subjection with the Lord Jesus, relieved and released from all ignoble bondage, springing up like flowers in the sun. Is that a thing to hope for? Is that a worthy thing to hope for, that the Lord Jesus may get control of all my powers, that he may take them like a great

conductor, conducting the orchestra, every one of my powers harmonising, co-operating, with every other power?

We Live by Faith. When you lie down to sleep, whether or not you think to offer up to the good Father a prayer of thanksgiving for the mercies of the day and a petition for protection through the shadows of the night, you close your eyes in faith that you will open them again with the morning's sun. Who will stand by your bedside with bellows to force the air into your sleepless lungs, —or, indeed, may they not fall asleep and fail you, when you have forgotten them in your slumber? Who will keep his hand on your heart and see that it pumps on when you are unconscious? When you fall asleep you go out of consciousness with an abiding faith in something or Somewhat, that you will return to consciousness with the new day. You would not dare to close your eyes in slumber this night, if you mistrusted that the machinery of your bodies would stop before the morning light. You would force yourself into wakefulness by torture and by terror, day after day and night after night, until your will at last succumbed to nature. Take out faith in the safety of helpless sleep, and the human race will become a pandemonium of madmen. So I might go through all the processes of living, and find faith at every step. If you must reason before the trusting you will die before you reach your conclusions. You live by faith. The processes of living are mainly faith in the Divine Preserver and in the uniformity of his law. *J. P. D. John,* in *Signs of God.*

II Other Heroes of Faith

Some Modern Names of Science Added to the Great Muster-Roll of Faith. "The trouble is", said Harold Raymond, on his return from his second year in college "that when you enter the sphere of religion, you deal with something quite different from anything that you meet in science. In the one you move step by step along lines of induction or deduction, and in the other you fling a highway through the air, in a bold and beautiful manner, but in a way quite different from that of science".

"I am not sure that the difference is so great as we are accustomed to suppose", replied his friend. "I have been thinking how scientific faith is, or, rather, how large a part faith plays in science. No man ever made a great discovery that was wholly an accident. I have wondered how it would seem if we were to try to add some modern names of science to the great muster-roll of faith in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews".

"I should like to hear how it would sound".

"By faith Columbus, when he was called of God to discover a new world, went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sailed strange waters, with Cabot, Magellan, Vespucius and Balboa, the heirs with him of the same promise.

By faith Copernicus lifted the earth from its solid base and set it to moving in rhythmic order round the sun; and all the suns and sons of suns with planets in bright array that circle round the throne of God. This he beheld by faith. By faith the men of science, who did not always call themselves men of faith, found substance in the things hoped for, and moved from experiment to hypothesis and from hypothesis to theory, and from theory to fact and from faith to sight; and all these were the children of faith.

And what shall I more say? For time would fail me to tell of Stephenson and Fulton, or Morse and Roentgen and Edison and Lister; of Cyrus Field and Alexander Bell and Marconi and Wilbur Wright, who through faith made iron float, yoked chariots to the invisible power of steam, caused the voice of man to be heard by his fellow man at a distance of a thousand miles, filled the air with voices inaudible to the ear, but intelligible to the mind of faith, and lifted the bodies and the minds of men on wings of wonder, and set them to sailing amid the clouds.

And wherein we have learned from saints and apostles, and the Lord of life, and have found sure footing for faith, let us not count it unreasonable that still we follow and live the life of faith." *Condensed* from *The Youth's Companion.*

Home Mission Heroes of Faith. "Only last week", said the superintendent of missions to his friend, "a young man came to me and asked for the hardest place I had. I sent him out to a rough little town of about three hundred people, where I had had another man from last November until Easter. Dur-

ing that time that man was the only pastor in the town, and he received for his services just one dollar and a half. Yet he had raised a subscription to build a church and had the foundation laid when he went to sleep Saturday night to wake up on Easter morning in glory. His successor has the same stuff in him, and I am confident that he will not only finish the church, but do great good in the community.

Another man found a church of twenty-five members with no place to worship. He had a large family to support, and the church paid him less than three hundred dollars. But he rented a hall, bought lumber, made the seats himself, and paid for lights and fuel and everything else without a cent of help from the people. In less than three months, the congregation numbered about two hundred, the Sunday-school doubled, and now they are planning for a new church building.

I can give you any number of such cases. These men live and die without attracting much attention on earth, but up yonder you will find their names added to that eleventh chapter of Hebrews". *Condensed* from *Youth's Companion.*

III The Christian Race

Let us Lay Aside Every Weight. What is a weight? This is Dr. G. Campbell Morgan's definition: Anything that hinders my running toward that goal. Love may be a weight, learning may be a weight. I am mentioning the highest things of set purpose, feeling that perhaps it is not necessary to discuss the lower. Anything that dims the vision of the ultimate is a weight.

Let us Lay Aside the Sin which doth so easily Beset us. Almost every girl born into an honorable, God-fearing family means to be a good and useful woman; to climb nearer to her Master every day. But many of them have habits of silliness, it may be, or of fretfulness, or of malicious gossip, or some lesser fault which seems trivial to them. It is pleasant; they cannot bring themselves to put it away; but it holds them back at every step.

The Alps rise before every man in his youth; the heights of fame, of success, of honor. But he has a taste for liquor, for exaggeration, for sharp dealing, for some agreeable vice, or, it may be, for nothing worse than indolent comfort. Whatever it is, he does not give it up. So at last in his climbing he slips and falls, never to rise again. He carried weight.

In Bunyan's wonderful allegory of the passage of a struggling soul through the world, the burden which Christian carried was not gross sin alone; it was made up, perhaps, of small failings and weaknesses, harmful only because they hindered him in his course. Do you, too, carry weight? *Youth's Companion.*

Let us Run with Patience.

Among a race barbaric, far removed
Beyond the distant hills of Daghestan,
There runs an ancient adage: "Who is proved
A hero in the stress of life? That man
Who, hard pressed, still endures a moment longer!"
O God of battles, make my purpose stronger,
My heart more earnest, consecrated, pure;
Help me, when sore beset, still to endure!
Willis Boyd Allen, in *Sunday School Times.*

So Run, that ye May Obtain.

He who to run life's race doth dare
With wrong at heart, though fleet he flees,
He may not win although he wear
The sandals of Hippomenes. *Clinton Scollard.*

Looking unto Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our Faith. Everything depends on where we look in the running of this great race of life. And the supreme comfort is that, in looking to Christ, we are not looking at an example only, or to a written word, a code of instructions. We have something far more precious. We have a living Friend and Savior, close at hand every day, a Friend with whom we may hold actual fellowship, with whom we may live, by whose strength we may be made strong. *Dr. Charles Brown.*

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

With what voice will we speak when we are dead? What will men hear when they turn their thoughts toward us? What part of us will remain alive, singing or jarring in men's remembrance? It is the biggest part of us that retains its voice. In some it is goodness. Cain still speaks in his jealous passion. Abel speaks in his faith. Yes, something goes on speaking. What will it be? *Dr. J. H. Jowett.*

Have you started on the great Christian race? Your progress is marked by the weights and sins you have laid aside.

Our Prayer. We bless thy name that our footsteps desire to take hold of those nobler and loftier strides, which the apostles and disciples and holy martyrs took. There they are to-day waiting—nay, not waiting, but blessedly active—in thy kingdom. We aspire to their society. We are of them. Our souls know their relationship. There is that in us which calls for them. We in our way are contesting things within and things without. Thou art inspiring us to it. To this conflict we are girded by thine own invisible hand. We hear thee speaking to us, and every day are encouraged to make new battle, to put on the whole armor of God; and having done all things, to stand. (*Condensed* from a *Prayer* by *Henry Ward Beecher.*)

SUGGESTIONS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The Epistle to the Hebrews. See pages 42-44 of our Introduction.
2. Faith's illusion. See chapter XVIII, of "Listening to God", by Hugh Black.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. What do we learn in the first 25 verses of Acts 8 about the witnessing in Samaria? 2. What command did the preaching in Samaria fulfil? (Acts 1.8.) 3. How did the Jews regard the Samaritans? (Jn. 4.9.) 4. What is said about Ethiopia in Ps. 68.31? 5. Was Candace a name or a title? (*Guide,* p. 141.) 6. From what prophet was the Ethiopian reading? 7. Where is the quotation found? (See footnote of Bible.) 8. What interpretations have been given of "His generation, who shall declare"? (*Guide,* p. 141.) 9. How was the prophecy of verse 32 fulfilled in Jesus? (Mt. 26.52, 67, 68; 27.12-14, 27-31). 10. When had Jesus himself said that the words of Isaiah were fulfilled in him? (Lk. 4.17-21.) 11. Why is verse 37 omitted from the Revised Version? (*Guide,* p. 141.) 12. Where was Gaza? Azotus? Cæsarea? Ethiopia? (*Guide,* p. 143.) 13. What is Philip called in Acts 21.8? 14. What reason does John 20.31 give for your studying the Scriptures? 15. Why is the Historical Book of the New Testament called the Acts? 16. By whom was it written? 17. How did he gain a knowledge of the events he records? 18. What do we know about him? 19. When was the Acts written? 20. What is the purpose of the book?

Questions to Think About. 1. One of the apostles was called Philip: what title do we give the Philip of our lesson which distinguishes him from Philip the apostle? (The Evangelist, or the Deacon, One of the Seven.) 2. How did an angel of the Lord speak to Philip? (*Guide,* p. 140.) 3. Was it the road or the site of Gaza that was desert? (*Guide,* p. 143.) 4. Did the Ethiopian have a book like our Bible in his hands? (*Guide,* p. 141.) 5. To what does "in his humiliation" refer, as the scripture was fulfilled by Christ? (*Guide,* p. 141.) 6. What is meant by "his judgment was taken away"? 7. Why does Luke record that Philip "opened his mouth"? (*Guide,* p. 141.) 8. What do you think was the substance of Philip's words to the Ethiopian? (*Guide,* p. 141.) 9. How may we understand the expression "the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip"? (*Guide,* p. 141.) 10. Recall some of the individuals upon whom Jesus spent time and patience. 11. What is the difference between Bible reading and Bible study?

Memory and Note-Book Work. Commit to memory Psalm 119.9-16, the Bible my Guide. In your Note-Book upon the Epistles give an account of the Epistle to the Hebrews. See pp. 42-44 of our Introduction. In your book about the Expansion of the Early Church follow the account of the martyrdom of Stephen with the words of Hebrews about "Heroes and Martyrs of Faith".

PHILIP AND THE ETHIOPIAN

Golden Text

Understandest thou what thou readest? Acts 8.30b

LESSON Acts 8.26-40 MEMORIZE verses 28-31

26 But an angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza; the same is desert. 27 And he arose and went: and behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was over all her treasure, who had come to Jerusalem to worship; 28 and he was returning and sitting in his chariot, and was reading the prophet Isaiah. 29 And the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. 30 And Philip ran to him, and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? 31 And he said, How can I, except some one shall guide me? And he besought Philip to come up and sit with him. 32 Now the passage of the scripture which he was reading was this,

He was led as a sheep to the slaughter;
And as a lamb before his shearer is dumb,
So he openeth not his mouth;
33 In his humiliation his judgment was taken away:
His generation who shall declare?
For his life is taken from the earth.

34 And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other? 35 And Philip opened his mouth, and beginning from this scripture, preached unto him Jesus. 36 And as they went on the way, they came unto a certain water; and the eunuch saith, Behold, *here is* water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? 38 And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they both went down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. 39 And when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip; and the eunuch saw him no more, for he went on his way rejoicing. 40 But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through he preached the gospel to all the cities till he came to Cæsarea.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINATED.

THE LESSON OUTLINE

I. A Commission Given and Obeyed, 26-29.
II. A Bible-Lesson, 30-35.
III. A Convert, 36-39.
IV. A Preaching Tour, 40.

26. *An angel of the Lord spake unto Philip.* "The text does not give us a hint as to the character of the messenger whom God used on this occasion. A vision, a dream, a human agent, some natural circumstance or instrument, all these are in Holy Scripture or in contemporary literature styled God's angels or messengers. Men saw then more deeply than we do, recognized the hand of a superintending Providence where we behold only secondary agents, and in their filial confidence spoke of angels where we should only recognize some natural power. The whole topic of angelic agencies has been much confused for us by the popular notions about angels, notions which affect every one. When men speak or think of angelic appearances, they think of angels as they are depicted in sacred pictures. The conception of young men clad in long white and shining raiment, with beautiful wings dependent from their shoulders and folded by their sides, is an idea of the angels and angelic life derived from mediæval painters and sculptors, not from Holy Writ. The important point, however, for us to remember is that Philip here moved under external direc-

tion to the conversion of the Ethiopian. The same Spirit which sent his messenger to direct Philip, led Peter to move towards exactly the same southwestern quarter of Palestine, where he was to remain working, meditating, praying till the hour had come when the next great step should be taken and the Gentiles admitted as recognized members of the Church" (*G. T. Stokes*).—*The same is desert.* See the Geographical Background.

27. *A man of Ethiopia.* Tradition gives him the name of Indich, and Irenæus and Eusebius make him the founder of Christianity in Arabia Felix and Ethiopia.—*Candace.* This was not a proper name, but like *Pharaoh* in Egypt or *Cæsar* in Rome, a title of the ruler.—*Who had.* The treasurer, not Candace.—*To worship.* He was either a Jew who lived in Ethiopia, then, or a proselyte, a heathen converted to Judaism. Compare Ps. 68.31.

28. *He was returning and sitting in his chariot, and was reading the prophet Isaiah.* He was returning from Jerusalem where he had gone to worship. "Pondering the great blessing of salvation which came to this officer we are first arrested by the fact of his readiness for the blessing. There were attention, predisposition, sympathy, expectation. All high blessing is ours as we await it in a certain state of preparedness, ripeness, susceptibility, and desire" (*Watkinson*).

29. *The Spirit said.* The message came as a divine impulse.

30. *Understandest....readest.* A commentator points out that there is a play upon the sound here: The Greek words are γινώσκεις (ginoskeis) and ἀναγινώσκεις (anaginoskeis). The eunuch was reading aloud, as was the Eastern way.

31. How can I, except some one shall guide me? "How can any soul travel through life by the aid of a map which he does not understand?" (*Youth's Companion*).

32. The quotation is from Isa. 53.7, the Greek, not the Hebrew version.

33. *In his humiliation.* In the humiliation of his sufferings.—*His judgment was taken away.* "The judgment due him, his rights of justice, were withheld by his enemies" (*Gloag*). By oppression and judgment he was taken away, Isa. 53.8.—*His generation who shall declare?* Various interpretations of these words have been given. "His generation is the new seed which he wins by his death. Ps. 22.30" (*Rackham*). "The wickedness of his contemporaries in their treatment of him, who shall set forth?" (*Hackett*). As for his generation, who among them considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living for the transgression of my people to whom the stroke was due? Isa. 53.8.

34. *Of whom speaketh the prophet this?* "The way to receive good instruction is to ask good questions." "The earlier Jewish authorities all understood chapter 53 of Isaiah to refer to the coming Messiah; the later Jewish writers treat it either as a composition of Jeremiah or Josiah, and as referring to the writer himself, or as fulfilled in and by the sufferings inflicted upon the Jewish nation as a nation" (*Abbott*).

35. *And Philip opened his mouth.* Compare Mt. 5.2; Acts 10.34. This is a Hebrew expression indicating that the words uttered were not spoken by chance but with deliberate purpose.—*Beginning from this scripture, preached unto him Jesus.* Doubtless he told how Jesus fulfilled the prophecy, and how by his death he had provided a way of salvation for all who accepted him.

36. *What doth hinder me to be baptized?* "Faith within and water without were ready" (*Bengel*).

37. This verse is wanting in the best Greek manuscripts, and has been omitted from the Revised Version. Scholars believe that it was written in the margin by an early scribe and then later copied in with the text.

39. *The Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip.* The most natural interpretation is that, just as Philip had been divinely led to go toward Gaza, now he was led by divine prompting to go quickly to Azotus.—*He went on his way rejoicing.* Eusebius reports that on his arrival home the eunuch evangelized his countrymen.—*Azotus.* Ashdod. See The Geographical Background.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

28. *He was reading the prophet Isaiah.* The scroll from which he was reading was probably the Greek version known to us as the Septuagint, for this was commonly used outside of Palestine. The quotation in verses 32 and 33 is from this version. From verse 30 we learn that he was reading aloud. The

Jewish rabbis taught that what was read aloud would be remembered, and they often insisted on this practice. It is still the custom in oriental lands to read aloud, even though alone. The scholars in Moslem schools read the Koran aloud. The famous El-Azhar University of Cairo claims seven thousand students, and I was thankful that many were absent the day I visited it and heard them "studying" their lessons by reading them aloud, over and over.

32. The passage of the scripture which he was reading. The law and the prophets were read in regular order in the synagogue service, and because this section from Isaiah was the one read at the Feast of Tabernacles, it has been suggested that the eunuch had been to Jerusalem for that festival. It is quite probable, however, that in Jerusalem he heard about the life and death of Jesus and the claims made by the disciples that Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies of the Christ, and therefore he was reading the prophecies of Isaiah and trying to determine for himself whether the prophet was describing his own sufferings or the sufferings of the promised Christ.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. What have we heard about Philip? What sort of man was he? What were his duties after his appointment? With whom did he share them? What followed the martyrdom of Stephen? Where were the disciples scattered? Where did they preach? Where had Jesus bid his followers witness for him? Until Stephen's martyrdom, where only had they borne witness? What prophet did we learn about last year who was directed to go to a certain place and at first refused, and when he did go sulked because the people believed his message?

Witnessing in Samaria. The persecution which immediately followed the stoning of Stephen forced the disciples to flee from Jerusalem. The apostles, indeed, remained at their post, and they seem not to have aroused the wrath of the Pharisees against themselves so much as did the aggressive Grecian Jews in the Church. The disciples took up the work of preaching the gospel in many lands, and the first foreign missionary work which Luke records was in Samaria. Samaria was in truth, a foreign field, for the Jews hitherto had cordially hated the Samaritans and would have "no dealings with them". Philip, one of "the Seven", known later as Philip the Evangelist (Acts 21.8), probably little realized the greatness of the movement he was inaugurating when he "went down to the city of Samaria, and proclaimed unto them the Christ". He found the fields "white unto harvest"; the people accepted his good tidings concerning the kingdom of God and were baptized. There was great joy among them when many with unclean spirits, the palsied, and the lame, were healed.

Among those who heard Philip was a magician named Simon. Until Philip's coming he had amazed the people with his sorceries, and they had thought him to be what he claimed, akin to God. Seeing the miracles wrought through Philip, Simon believed Philip a greater magician than himself; he was baptized and continued with Philip as one of the disciples.

Report reached the apostles at Jerusalem that Philip had preached the word of God to the Samaritans and large numbers of them had believed and been baptized. Could it be possible that the Kingdom of God was to include these despised people! The news made so great an impression on the apostles that they sent Peter and John to Samaria to investigate the new departure. Peter and John were satisfied that the divine purpose was being carried out, and they gave their sanction and encouragement to the movement by praying for the people and laying their hands upon them. The divine approval was shown by the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the people.

What the visible signs of the coming of the Spirit were we can not know, but Simon the sorcerer beheld them, and coveted what he thought to be in the power of the apostles. He offered to give them money if they would tell him how he, too, could lay his hands on others and bring upon them the Holy Spirit. Horrified at such ignorance of the meaning of the gift of God, and at the wickedness of the thought that it could be bought with money, Peter exclaimed, "Thy silver perish with thee! Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter, for thy heart is not right before God". And then he urged him to repent and pray God that the thought might be forgiven him, for Peter foresaw

that his sin would become venomous and would menace the church. Simon, however, only thought of the apostles as greater sorcerers than himself, and fearing not his sin but its punishment, asked them to pray for him that he might escape retribution.

On their way back to Jerusalem the apostles themselves preached the gospel in many villages of Samaria. Thus were Samaritans brought into the kingdom of God.

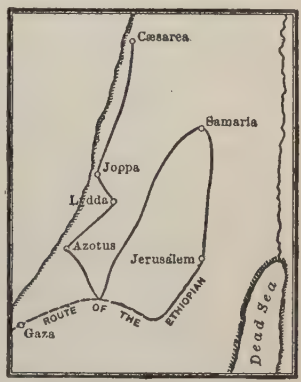
Witnessing in "the South". In the midst of his successful labors in Samaria, Philip was divinely directed to go southward, to the road that led from Jerusalem to Gaza. The account which follows of the conversion of the Ethiopian is given by Luke for the same reason that he records the preaching in Samaria, to show how the gospel was being carried beyond Jerusalem, this time to a man of great influence and authority in Africa.

The Date. While the length of time covered by the events narrated in the first seven chapters of the Acts is not known and may have been very brief, a period of at least six years is usually allowed for them. Six years after Pentecost brings the date to 36 A. D.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Palestine west of the Jordan consisted of three districts: Judea, Samaria, and Galilee. Judea and Samaria together formed a Roman province at this time. Philip was in Samaria when directed to go southward to the road leading from Jerusalem to Gaza.

Gaza was on the coast, about fifty miles southwest of Jerusalem. The old Gaza, one of the five chief cities of the Philistines, had occupied a site two miles from the coast, but it was now in ruins, having been destroyed in 96 B. C. by the Maccabean prince Alexander. Josephus and Strabo refer to the old site as desert, and the words of verse 26 "the same is desert" probably refer to this site, not to the road from Jerusalem as a whole. Somewhere on this road Philip fell in with the Ethiopian.



PHILIP'S JOURNEYS

Ethiopia was the name given to all Africa south of Egypt. In the northern part of Ethiopia, between the two rivers which unite to form the Blue Nile, was the kingdom called Meroe by the Romans. This kingdom was ruled by queens whose royal title was Candace. It was doubtless from this kingdom that the queen's officer had journeyed down the Nile Valley, across the Isthmus, up the coast-road to Gaza, and then over the hill country to Jerusalem.

Azotus was the ancient Ashdod, twenty miles above Gaza. Philip continued northward, preaching in the cities on the way, till he reached Cæsarea, the Roman capital of the province of Judea. Here we find him one year later, Acts 21.8.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

When Lord Shaftesbury was teaching this lesson one day he asked a boy why the Ethiopian went on his way rejoicing. The boy's answer is interesting, though of course, it can have no home-thrust for you. He replied, "Because Philip had done teaching him".

"Understandest thou what thou readest?" It is a lamentable fact that the majority of educated men and women lose very early in life the power to read and understand books that require deep thought. They cease to exercise their minds on such books and the latter grow rusty, so to speak, and require a great amount of oiling to get them in working order again. One of the many rewards that come to a Sunday-school teacher is the fact that his constant study of the Bible keeps his mind alert and frees him from the necessity of oiling his mental works. To understand the Bible requires deep thought and constant study. It requires light from other minds. The self-satisfied teacher, who re-

fuses help, because he deems himself already sufficiently well-informed, or because, as he says, his study must be wholly his own, lacks the Ethiopian's wisdom.

Candace of Ethiopia, with Captives of War From a Sepulchral Pyramid near Ancient Meroe

The strategic value of a single soul won for Christ is shown by this lesson. Philip had been preaching to crowds in Samaria, but God wanted him to leave them all and save one man on the road to Gaza. A teacher will usually win his pupils one by one. Have you been the Philip to take God's message to each member of your class personally, when you could talk with him alone? Mr. S. D. Gordon tells of a friend who attended the funeral of a young woman. Meeting the pastor of the church where she had attended, he asked, "Was Mary a Christian"? To his surprise a pained look came into the man's face as he replied: "Three weeks ago I had a strong impulse to speak to her, but I did not; and I do not know". A moment later, he met the girl's Sunday-school teacher and asked her the same question. Quickly the tears came as she said: "Two weeks ago a voice seemed to say to me, 'Speak to Mary', and I knew what it meant, and I intended to, but I did not, and I do not know".

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. When a distinguished Japanese, the Secretary to the Ambassador from Japan, was baptized in the Christian faith many asked what had led him to take this step. He had found a Bible in his room in a hotel in Washington, placed there by the Gideons, and had studied the book long and carefully, until he became convinced that Jesus is the Christ. Not in vain is the seed of the Word of God sown in unlikely places: it brings forth fruit. No one would have thought that lonely road from Jerusalem to Gaza a likely place to gain a convert. Yet Philip was sent there. Who was Philip?

For Older Pupils. Begin with the Historical Background.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Obeying the Voice

Not Disobedient unto the Heavenly Voice. Philip was up in Samaria. He was preaching to great crowds of people. They heard him gladly. They believed his message. Jesus had bade his followers be his witnesses in Samaria. Was he not doing the will of God? Yet he was directed to leave this profitable field and go toward the South, to a desolate place on the road that led from Jerusalem to Gaza. Why? He knew not. He must have wondered much over the interruption to his prosperous mission, yet he instantly obeyed. He was convinced that it was God's leading. The true servant of Jesus Christ knows that his Lord has need of him in only one place at one time, and he knows that any place, however desert, is his rightful place if he is directed to it by the Spirit. On that road Philip saw a foreigner sitting in his chariot and reading as he rode slowly along. The inward voice, which was the prompting of the Holy Spirit, bade him go near and join that man. Would he be welcomed? Would the man not spurn his advances? Philip stopped not to consider such possibilities, he did not even loiter along to think it all over, but he ran to meet the chariot. The result we know. Paul rejoiced that he was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision, and Philip must have rejoiced that he was not disobedient unto the heavenly voice. There is no finer example in the Bible of instant obedience to divine leading.

How we May Hear the Voice. Let us notice how busy the Spirit of the Lord is with the evangelist Philip. The Spirit is the busiest Worker in the

narrative. He is like the mysterious Ariel in Shakespeare's "Tempest", working invisible here, there, and everywhere. First, he gives Philip *general* guidance. "Arise, and go toward the South". He creates a certain trend or tendency in the life. He starts us upon journeys whose precise endings are still unknown. Then, he gives Philip *particular guidance.* "Go near, and join thyself to this chariot".

If I, too, would have the constant guidance of the Spirit, three things are needful:—(1) I must keep sensitive toward God. To this end I must pray and praise without ceasing. (2) I must listen for his voice. His voice is always "the upward calling". I must hearken to my conscience, and to the quiet whisperings in my soul. (3) I must obey the voice. Every time I obey I improve my organ of hearing, and the Spirit can tell me deeper secrets. *Dr. J. H. Jowett,* in *Sunday School Chronicle.*

How to Obey the Voice.

Not thine, nor mine, to question or reply,
When he commands us, asking "How"? or "Why"?
He knows the cause, his ways are wise and just,
Who serves the King must serve with perfect trust.
Dr. Henry van Dyke.

II Personal Evangelism

The First Personal Evangelist. Here is the first instance of personal dealing with a soul. The desert was a remarkable contrast to Samaria, with its crowds, but Philip knew how to deal with the individual as well as with the crowd. It is more difficult, to some, to speak to the individual than to the crowd, but if we follow Philip's example our difficulties will be solved. There must be a receptive and responsive attitude on the part of the person who wishes to win individuals. He must be on the watch for opportunites, and must be ready to seize them and use them. This is only possible as he lives in fellowship with the Spirit.

There came into the Eunuch's heart the intense desire for that which Philip had proclaimed. The desire expressed itself in determination, and from determination came the acceptance of Christ as Savior and Lord. In the readiness for baptism, the acceptance was shown and proved. All evangelistic work should be done with a view to immediate results. Whether speaking to crowds or to individuals, we ought to press upon them the necessity for the immediate acceptance of Christ. Unless preaching brings the hearers into living touch with Christ, it fails. Immediate results are obtained when he is preached as a Person. The more we get hold of that, the more thoroughly will we "do the work of an evangelist". *Griffith Thomas,* in an *Address.*

Go near, and Glue thyself to this Chariot. This is Dr. A. C. Dixon's rendering of the command, giving the Greek word its literal meaning. Speaking about what is called "the glueing method", Dr. Dixon said: "Go near. Get near some one. Approach somebody for Christ. Do it in the right way, but do it, and begin to work for the salvation of some individual with a spirit which indicates that you are going to succeed. Not just touch and leave, but *glue,* a determination, a purpose that is formed of God, a resolve that by the help of the Holy Spirit, you are going to win that soul to Jesus, if it takes ten minutes, if it takes ten hours, or ten weeks, ten months, or ten years; *glueing* yourself to that individual—that is God's method."

Speak to Him. Hugh McAllister Beaver, son of the former governor of Pennsylvania, and one of the rarest Christian young men that ever lived, felt impelled at a conference of students at Northfield, in '97, to tell this bit of inner experience, though naturally reluctant to do so. While at college, arrangements were made for a series of meetings every night for a week. "One day going down the hallway of the college building", he said, "I met a boy we all called Dutchy, one of the toughest fellows in school. I said to him, 'Dutch, come to the meeting to-night.'" Instead of laughing or swearing, to Beaver's surprise, he paused a moment as though such a thing was possible, and Beaver said, "I prayed quietly to myself, and urged him to come". And he said, "Well, I guess I will". And that night to every one's surprise Dutch came to the meeting. When Beaver rose to speak, to his surprise this fellow was not simply inter-

ested but his eyes were full of tears. And Beaver said, "A voice as distinct as an audible voice said to me, 'Speak to Dutchy!' But *I did not*". Again the next night Dutchy came of his own accord, and one of the boys putting his arm on Beaver's shoulder said, "Speak to Dutchy. We boys never saw him like this before". And he said he would. But *he did not*. And some time after he had a dream and thought he would not walk this earth any more. It did not trouble him except that his brother was crying. But he thought he met the Master who looked into his face, and said, "Hugh, do you remember, I asked you to speak to Dutchy?" "Yes." "And you did not." "No." "Would you like to go back to the earth and win him?" And he finished the story by saying, "It's hard work, but he's coming now". *S. D. Gordon,* in *Quiet Talks on Power.*

III Understandest thou what thou Readest?

Do You Understand? Do you understand the Scripture which you read? Are you a spiritual kinsman of the Ethiopian? Only to seeking souls does God reveal his truths. Many a one has had the treasure of the sacred Scriptures in his hand, but not knowing its worth, it has escaped him. Do you know your Bible, do you love it, do you gain from it rich lessons for daily living?

Does your Bible speak to you at all? In the highest part of Hong Kong during three months of the year a damp fog settles and deposits a blue mold over everything that is not used daily. Would there be a blue mold on your Bible if you lived there? You know that Jesus was very familiar with the Word of God. If he needed to know the Scriptures, can you imagine that you can get along well enough without knowing them?

Robert Louis Stevenson has told us about a Welsh blacksmith who heard a chapter of Robinson Crusoe read aloud in a farm kitchen. He was twenty-five years old, and could neither read nor write, and up to that moment he had sat content, huddled in his ignorance. But he left the kitchen another man: there were day-dreams, it appeared, divine day-dreams, written and printed and bound, and to be bought for money and enjoyed at pleasure. Down he sat, painfully learned to read Welsh, and returned to borrow the book. It had been lost! He could find no other Welsh copy, but he finally found one in English. Down he sat once more, learned English, and at length with entire delight read "Robinson Crusoe". You can read without the slightest effort the great divine Book: do you?

One may be able to read the Bible in the original Hebrew and Greek and yet not understand what one reads. The Bible may be merely a book. And one may scarcely be able to read the Bible in one's own language, and yet one may have a deep understanding of its worth and meaning. The Bible is *the* book.

How much time do you give to the reading of your Bible? Is it your custom to read it daily? One may read a chapter or more morning and evening for many, many years, and yet the reading may have little value because one's mind is not upon what one reads, the mood is worlds away from that eager search of the Ethiopian.

If your zeal in reading the Bible is mainly to cover a certain amount of ground, you are not reading it aright. Rather should you read less and think about what you read. Weigh the words. Think them over. Learn their message for you.

Good Counsel. A student in one college was confessing to me that he did not believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, but in answer to my question he admitted that he had never spent a connected hour in weighing evidence on this subject. In Australia I noticed that they often found the gold dust on or near the surface, but that as a rule the nuggets were discovered by digging. In the gold districts of our western states the largest output of gold is the result of cyanide process in connection with which the ore is crushed and by various processes the precious metal is extracted. So today the men who are bringing the richest treasures from the mines of God are those who are giving themselves to the most thorough-going processes of mediation. There is no symmetrical, constant, healthy development of the spiritual life apart from reflection upon the truth of God. The absence of the this explains why so many Christians are not growing, but rather standing still or going back spiritually.

Have a favorable place for meditation. Have a regular time for meditation. Give sufficient time to meditation. Use the Bible as the basis and guide in meditation. *Dr. John R. Mott,* in *Northfield Echoes.*

The Missionary's Need of Understanding the Bible. The Rev. Clayton Sedgwick Cooper said that one of the first needs with which he was confronted as he arrived in the Orient was the insistent necessity of a thorough mastery and interpretation of the Bible. He found that the heathen world knew the book of his religion more perfectly than he knew it. In fact, many of these people had studied it, he said, more carefully than they had studied their own sacred vedas.

One is profoundly impressed in Korea, Mr. Cooper writes in "The Bible and Modern Life", by going into churches that are literally packed to the doors, many containing over a thousand men and women, listening to the exposition of the Bible. The vivid apprehension of the deep principles of this Book is now the predominent influence in bringing Korea, as a nation, nearer perhaps to an entire Christian evangelization than any nation on the face of the earth. At least, a traveler in the country is deeply impressed with the fact of the tremendous power of the Bible when it is with transparent honesty accepted in its simplest terms.

And again he writes: I was deeply impressed to find in the city of Nagasaki, fifty students in one of the colleges arising at six o'clock each morning and spending an hour singly and together, in prayer and Bible study. It was not surprising to find an unusual depth of serious motive and ideal among the men of this institution. These students had discovered not simply the *knowledge* but the *power* of the Bible.

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

It was not the apostles, but the disciples, the rank and file of the church, who were scattered abroad and who went everywhere preaching the Word. The responsibility for witnessing for Christ does not rest on the leaders of the church alone. Do you know the way to God so well that you can show it to some one else and send him away rejoicing? asks Dr. Maltbie D. Babcock. Philip did. What else in life is so well worth while as showing a wanderer God's road?

The Ethiopian treasurer was a model scholar. He was eager to read the Word of God, eager to have it explained to him, and eager to heed what he had learned. After he understood the teaching of Jesus Christ, he was eager to be baptized and thus acknowledge himself his disciple.

Will you not follow the advice of Ruskin, and make it the first morning business of your life to understand some portion of the Bible clearly, and your business to obey it in all that you do understand?

Our Prayer. O Lord, beget in our hearts a great expectancy that will keep us alert for the best things in store for us. Help us to believe that the best will come. Guide our feet in the way of duty so that we may not miss any good thing that may be waiting for us. May this story be an inspiration to us. May we be able to talk as easily about the affairs of the kingdom as we talk of the things of this world. Let spiritual matters become so real to us that we will lose all embarrassment in conversing about them. O Lord, give us the boldness of the desert preacher, give us his passion for spiritual conquest. For thy name's sake. Amen. (*George Skene.*)

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Why should a business man study the Bible. See "The Bible and Modern Life", by Clayton Sedgwick Cooper.

2. Evan Roberts' phrase, "Bend to the Spirit". See *The Christian Advocate,* Jan. 21, 1915, page 86.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

(If you decide to follow the general review plan, p. 148, or to have essays written, p. 153, assign work accordingly. If you are to have the contest review, p. 153, tell your class about it to-day and let them choose the leaders.)

Write Chapter IX, the Life and Work of Philip the Evangelist. See Acts 6.5; 8.4-13; 21.8, 9. Copy in your Note-Book the map on p. 143.

REVIEW—THE GREAT MULTITUDE

Golden Text

They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun strike upon them, nor any heat; for the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall be their shepherd, and shall guide them unto fountains of waters of life; and God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes. Revelation 7.16, 17

READING LESSON Revelation 7.9-17

A GENERAL REVIEW OF THE FIRST EIGHT CHAPTERS OF THE ACTS

For a review before the whole school, let each of sixteen pupils from different classes commit to memory one of the sections below, and on Review Sunday stand before the school and recite this history covered by the quarter's lessons.

Lesson I. In Luke's earlier treatise, the Third Gospel, he had told about what Jesus *began* to do and teach before his ascension. Jesus had showed himself alive to the apostles many times during the forty days after his crucifixion, and had bade them wait at Jerusalem for the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which the Father had promised them through him. When the apostles were met with Jesus for the last time they asked him if he would at that time restore the kingdom to Israel. "It is not for you to know times or season," Jesus replied, and promised them power through the coming of the Holy Spirit. After bidding them be his witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judæa and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth, a cloud hid him from their sight. As they stood gazing upward, two men in white apparel stood by and assured them that Jesus should come again in like manner as he had departed.

From the Mount of Olives, where they had parted from Jesus, the apostles returned to the Upper Chamber in Jerusalem and with other disciples, one hundred and twenty in all, engaged in earnest prayer. At the suggestion of Peter, two names were proposed for a successor of Judas, and Mathias was chosen.

Lesson II. On the day of Pentecost the disciples were all assembled in one place, when suddenly there came a sound like a mighty wind and a sight like tongues of fire resting on each one, and all were filled with the Holy Spirit. The Jews in Jerusalem who came together were amazed to hear these Galileans speaking in "other tongues"; from the most distant lands they had come, and each heard in his own language the mighty works of God declared. In amazement some of the Jews said the disciples must be filled with new wine.

Lesson III. Then Peter arose and spoke for them all, affirming that this wonderful event had been foretold, that God had raised Jesus from the dead, the One whose mighty works the Jews had witnessed and whom they had crucified, and that his resurrection had been foretold by David. Jesus had been exalted to the right hand of God and what they saw and heard was his promised gift of the Holy Spirit. "Ye may know for a surety that God has made him Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom ye crucified," Peter cried, and they were pricked in their heart, and cried out, "What must we do?" "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for to you and your children is the promise," Peter exhorted them, and about three thousand obeyed.

Many wonders were wrought by the apostles. Many of the disciples sold their possessions and gave to others as they had need, and the brotherhood of believers lived in peace and unity, praising God and giving him thanks for all things.

Lesson V. One day as Peter and John were going into the temple at the hour of prayer, a beggar, who had been lame from his birth, asked them for alms at the Gate Beautiful. "Silver and gold have I none," said Peter, "but

what I have, that give I thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk." Then he took him by the hand, and the lame man arose, and leaping and praising God entered the temple with them. A wondering crowd followed them afterwards into Solomon's Porch and Peter addressed them, telling them that he and John had not wrought the miracle by their own power, but faith in Jesus the Christ had made the man whole, the One whom they had denied and killed and God had raised from the dead.

Peter urged the Jews about him to repent of what they had done in ignorance and many of them accepted Jesus as the Christ, so that the number of believers became five thousand. While they were talking to the people they were seized by the priests and the captain of the temple and put in prison.

Lesson VI. The next day Peter and John were brought before the Sanhedrin and asked by what power or by what name they had healed the lame man. "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, and there is no other name under heaven that is given among men wherein we must be saved," boldly answered Peter. Marvelling at such courage, and unable to say anything against the miracle because the lame man was there as evidence, the Sanhedrin could only threaten the apostles and let them go, charging them not to speak in the name of Jesus. "Whether it is right in the sight of God to hearken unto you rather unto God, judge ye, for we cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard," declared the apostles.

The apostles returned to their own company, and all united in praise and prayer, petitioning for power to speak God's word with boldness.

Lesson VIII. The apostles continued to give their witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus with great power, and the believers continued to live together and have possessions in common. There was not one among them that lacked, for those who had lands or houses sold them, and brought the money to the apostles to distribute to those in need. One of these was Barnabas, who sold a field and brought all the money to the apostles. Then deceit and covetousness and desire of praise filled the hearts of two disciples, Ananias and Sapphira, and they kept part of the money they received from the sale of a possession, and gave the rest to the apostles as though it were their all. Retribution quickly followed, and each died and was buried within a few hours. Great fear came upon the whole church.

The apostles wrought many miracles and believers were constantly added to the number of the faithful followers of Christ. The high priests and Sadducees were consumed with jealousy, and they had Peter and John again arrested. The apostles were divinely liberated and were preaching in the temple when officers came to bring them before the Council. Gamaliel advised the rulers to let the apostles alone, for if their work were of men it would be overthrown, and if it were of God, then the Sanhedrin would be fighting even against God. Gamaliel's advice was followed, and the apostles went away rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the Name.

Lesson IX. In the brotherhood of believers discord arose because the widows of the Grecian Jews were neglected while those of the Hebrews were cared for. The apostles said it was not fitting that they should leave their preaching to attend to this, and asked to have seven men "full of the Spirit and of wisdom" appointed to attend to such matters. Stephen, Philip, and five others were chosen.

Stephen at once became prominent in the work, and was brought before the Sanhedrin on a false charge. He made an eloquent defence, in which he rehearsed the history of the covenant people, and then suddenly accused his hearers of murdering the Righteous One.

Lesson X. So enraged were Stephen's hearers that they gnashed on him with their teeth, but looking calmly upward he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God". With one accord they rushed upon him, dragged him without the city, and stoned him there. "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge," cried Stephen as he "fell asleep". The witnesses who cast the first stones had laid their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul, and "Saul was consenting to his death". Then there

arose a great persecution against the church in Jerusalem, in which Saul was the chief actor, and all save the apostles were driven away into the regions of Judæa and Samaria.

They that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word. Philip, one of the seven deacons, proclaimed Christ in the city of Samaria and many believed. The apostles at Jerusalem sent Peter and John to investigate the work in Samaria and they, finding that the Holy Spirit was given there, preached also in the Samaritan villages.

Lesson XII. Philip was directed by God to leave the work in Samaria and go toward Gaza. He obeyed at once, and was directed to approach the chariot of an Ethiopian, the treasurer of the queen, who was returning from a visit to Jerusalem where he had been to worship. He heard the Ethiopian reading aloud a prophetic passage from Isaiah, and he asked him if he understood it. "How can I, except some one shall guide me?" asked the latter in his turn, and besought Philip to join him. Philip did so, and beginning with that scripture passage he preached unto him Jesus. When they reached a place where there was water the Ethiopian begged Philip to baptize him, and then went on his way rejoicing. Philip returned to Cæsarea, preaching the gospel in the cities through which he passed.

A REVIEW BY MEANS OF ALLUSIONS

For a written review, write each quotation on a separate sheet of paper, as many of each as you have pupils, and let the pupils tell the writing, or the story in brief, to which the quotation alludes. As soon as a pupil has finished with one, let him have another.

As an oral review much interest will be aroused by letting all who recognize the allusion signify this after the reading of each quotation. Call for the statement.

To have the mind of Christ in its essence and its exercise is to know no rest in the presence of sin and sorrow, until God's day breaks and his kingdom is established. *Dr. G. Campbell Morgan.*

My friends who have gone before constitute a cloud of witnesses who look on to see how I run my race and live my life. *Dr. Lyman Abbott.*

"Japan has seen believers scattered abroad preaching the word, and many with one accord giving heed to the things that were spoken."

All souls that struggle and aspire,
All hearts of prayer by thee are lit,
And dim or clear, thy tongues of fire
On dusky tribes and twilight countries sit.

Whittier.

The doctrine of the church is explicit in its recognitions of the truth expressed by Paul in his declaration of Christ's "self-beggary" in order that he might enter into humanity and fill it with the riches of his nature. *Dr. Lyman Abbott.*

Forgiveness is but the entrance-gate to the blessedness that waits for us. We are not to sit in the porch, lame and begging; we are to get up, in Christ's name, and go on leaping and praising God right into the holy temple. *Mark Guy Pearse.*

O, the joy to see thee reigning,
Thee, my own beloved Lord!
Every tongue thy name confessing,
Worship, honor, glory, blessing,
Brought to thee with glad accord!
Thee, my Master and my Friend,
Vindicated and enthroned!
Unto earth's remotest end
Glorified, adored, and owned! *Frances Ridley Havergal.*

Was ever in the human soul so unquenchable a fire? Silver and gold they had none. They did not seek to win mankind by materialistic gifts. Such as they had they gave. The alms they distributed were faith, hope, love. *Charles Silvester Horne.*

"The supernatural is the native air of Christianity, its cradle-song is one of angels, its death-chant the triumphant exclamation, 'Behold, I see the heavens opened'."

A PICTURE REVIEW

Before class-time have the pictures on the next page copied upon your blackboard. Each picture should be covered with a piece of paper attached at the top by paste so that it can be quickly removed. Tear off one paper at a time, and question your pupils about the lesson which the picture recalls.

Or the pictures may be traced and pasted on twelve cards, and on the space below, the story may be written by a pupil.

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER PUPILS

1. Who asked, "Understandest thou what thou readest"? 2. Of whom did he ask it? 3. What did the latter answer? 4. Who said, "Lay not this sin to their charge"? What was the sin? 5. On what occasion did Peter say, "We cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard"? 6. Who said, "What doth hinder me to be baptized"? 7. Who baptized him? 8. Who exclaimed, "Behold, are not all these that speak Galileans"? 9. Why were they surprised? 10. Who said, "Behold I see the heavens opened, and the son of man standing on the right hand of God"? 11. Who asked, "What shall we do"? 12. Of whom did they ask it? 13. What answer did they receive? 14. Who said, "It is not fit that we should forsake the word of God, and serve tables"? 15. Why did they say it? 16. How were they relieved from this care? 17. Of whom was it said that they had been with Jesus? 18. What was meant by this? 19. To whom did Paul write, "Have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus"? 20. Finish the verses which begin—Bear ye one another's, Let us run with patience, Know ye not that ye are a temple, Now faith is assurance.

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR OLDER PUPILS

1. Who wrote the Acts? 2. Who was Luke? 3. What is the relationship between the Third Gospel and the book of Acts? 4. What does each one tell about the work of Jesus Christ? 5. When was Acts written? 6. What is the character of the book? 7. What can you say about its reliability? 8. What can you tell about the Epistle to the Philippians? 9. What can you tell about the Epistle to the Hebrews? 10. What was the ascension? 11. Who were with Jesus at the ascension? 12. What did Jesus expect them to do after he left them? 13. What are the words of "the Great Commission"? 14. What happened at Pentecost? 15. What does it mean to be "filled with the Spirit of God"? 16. When and how did Peter first witness for Jesus? 17. What was the result of his witnessing? 18. What was the first instance of trouble in the Church? 19. What is the second? 20. Who was the first Christian martyr? 21. What young man saw the death of Stephen and rejoiced? 22. What saying of Stephen's reminds one of Christ? 23. How did the persecution of the Church prove a blessing? 24. How far had the gospel spread during the time covered by this quarter's lessons? 25. What is the great "faith chapter" of the Bible?

A REVIEW OF VERSES

Repeat (or write) the verse which—

1. Speaks about some one being led as a sheep.
2. Begins: Now when they heard this, they were pricked.
3. Tells us of spiritual inheritance.
4. Speaks about things working together for good.
5. Is a definition of faith.
6. Refers to a race.
7. Says something about listening to God or to men.
8. Mentions a stone and the head of a corner.
9. Mentions lowliness of mind and vainglory.
10. Tells about a wonderful name.
11. Begins: Have this mind.
12. Gives directions for the evangelization of the world.

THE WORLD FOR CHRIST
I
II
III
SONS OF GOD
IV
V
GOLDEN TEXT FOR THE QUARTER
The Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall be their shepherd, and shall guide them unto fountains of waters of life.
Rev. 7.16, 17
XII
THEY HAD BEEN WITH JESUS
VI
XI
X
IX
VIII
THE MIND OF CHRIST
VII

A REVIEW CONTEST

Let two classes unite for this review, each with a leader. Let the teacher of class A ask the questions, and the teacher of class B keep the records. Class A is asked the first question and all who think they can answer hold up their hands. The leader of class A decides who shall answer. The teacher who is judge gives class A a credit or a debit mark. If the answer is wrong, the question is then given to class B. The second question is given first to class B, the third to class A, and so on. The questions should all be such as can be answered in a few words. Space does not permit a full set of questions here, but the teachers can easily prepare in advance a sufficiently long list.

1. Who said, "Silver and gold have I none, but what I have, that give I thee"?
2. What man and woman died because they lied about the amount they received for a piece of land?
3. Why were the Seven Helpers appointed?
4. Who met the Ethiopian on the way to Gaza?
5. What happened on the day of Pentecost?
6. In whose name did Peter say the lame man was healed?
7. Complete this verse: Wherefore also God highly exalted him.
8. Complete this verse: I see the heavens.
9. In the early days of the church who complained because of neglect?
10. Where in the Bible is the great chapter about faith?

SUBJECTS FOR ESSAYS

1. The gift and the fruits of the Holy Spirit.
2. The perils from without and from within the early Church.
3. The Spread of Christianity in Jerusalem and Samaria.
4. The first Christian martyr.
5. Peter's discourses.
6. The Book of the Acts.
7. The Book of Philippians.
8. The Book of Hebrews.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. What can you learn about Saul's early life? (Acts 21.39; 22.3-5; Phil. 3.5, 6; 2 Cor. 11.21, 22.) 2. Where is Tarsus? 3. What sort of city was Tarsus at this time? (*Guide,* p. 158.) 4. Why did Saul persecute the Christians? (Acts 26.9, 14; 1 Tim. 1.13.) 5. What did he say about his persecutions in Acts 22.4, 19, 20; 26.10, 11? 6. What is Saul's other name? (*Guide,* p. 156.) 7. How did the Romans regard the authority of the high priest? (*Guide,* p. 156.) 8. Study the three accounts in Acts of Paul's conversion (9.1-22; 22.1-16; 26.9-20) and compare 1 Cor. 15.8, 9; 2 Cor. 11.32, 33; Gal. 1.13-17; 1 Tim. 1.12-16. 9. What time of day was it that Paul saw the great light? (Acts 22.6.) 10. Why is the sentence "It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks" omitted from the RV? (*Guide,* p. 155.) 11. What does Lk. 10.16 tell us about the way one may persecute Jews? 12. What additional statements about the vision are given in Acts 26? 13. What qualification was regarded as indispensable for an apostle? (Acts 1.22.) 14. On what ground did Paul base his claim to equal authority with the other apostles in 1 Cor. 15.8; Gal. 2.8? 15. Where is Damascus? 16. How does "Straight Street" look to-day? (*Guide,* p. 158.) 17. What is said about Ananias in Acts 22.12? 18. Why did Ananias hesitate to go to Paul and how was he convinced that Paul's heart was changed? (Verses 12-16.)

Questions to Think About. 1. What is the force of the word *But* in the first sentence? (*Guide,* p. 154.) 2. How had Saul been persecuting Jesus? 3. What was Saul's attitude toward Jesus at this time? (*Guide,* ¶ 1, p. 157.) 4. What is the meaning of "of the Way"? (*Guide,* p. 155. 5. Was Saul sincere in seeking to put an end to the doctrine of those "of the Way"? 6. What other sincere persecutors have you read about? (*Guide,* p. 159.) 7. How was Saul persecuting Jesus, verse 5? (Lk. 10.16.) 8. Is this Ananias the Ananias who was so great a hypocrite? 9. How could Paul write of himself as the chief of sinners? (*Guide,* p. 160.) 10. Why was such an experience necessary to bring Paul to a saving knowledge of Jesus? (*Guide,* p. 160.) 11. Must every one pass through an experience something like Paul's in order to accept Jesus as his Savior? 12. Recall the quiet, deliberate way in which the Ethiopian officer was led to accept Jesus as his Savior; was he as truly converted as Paul? 13. **Have you accepted Jesus as your Savior?**

SECOND QUARTER

LESSON I—APRIL 2

CONVERSION OF SAUL.

Golden Text

Faithful is the saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. 1 Timothy 1.15

LESSON Acts 9.1-31; (compare also Galatians 1.11-17; 1 Timothy 1.12-17): Acts 9.1-11, 17-19 printed MEMORIZE verses 17, 18

1. But Saul, yet breathing threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, 2 and asked of him letters to Damascus unto the synagogues, that if he found any that were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. 3 And as he journeyed, it came to pass that he drew nigh unto Damascus: and suddenly there shone round about him a light out of heaven: 4 and he fell upon the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? 5 And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And he *said*, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: 6 but rise, and enter into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. 7 And the men that journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing the voice, but beholding no man. 8 And Saul arose from the earth: and when his eyes were opened, he saw nothing: and they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus. 9 And he was three days without sight, and did neither eat nor drink.

10 Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and the Lord said unto him in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I *am here*, Lord. 11 And the Lord *said* unto him, Arise, and go to the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one named Saul, a man of Tarsus: for behold, he prayeth; 17 And Ananias departed, and entered into the house; and laying his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, *even* Jesus, who appeared unto thee in the way which thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mayest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit. 18 And straightway there fell from his eyes as it were scales, and he received his sight; and he arose and was baptized; 19 and he took food and was strengthened.

And he was certain days with the disciples that were at Damascus.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

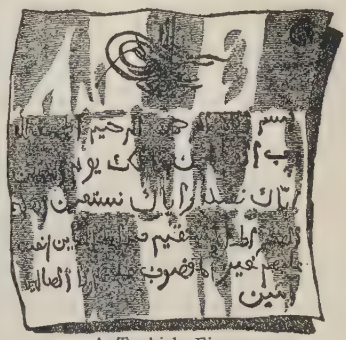
THE LESSON OUTLINE.

I. Saul the Persecutor, 1-2.
II. Divine Intervention, 3-9.
III. Ananias Convinced of Saul's Conversion, 10-16.
IV. Ananias Visits Saul, 17-19.

1. *But Saul.* The *but* indicates the contrast in Luke's mind between Philip's zeal for the church (last lesson) and Saul's zeal in persecuting it.—*Yet.* Recall Acts 8.1-3, lesson X of Last Quarter.—*Breathing threatening and slaughter.* "The figure is founded on the fact that a person under excitement of a strong emotion breathes harder and quicker, pants, struggles to give vent to the passion of which he is full" (*Hackett*). See Paul's words in Acts 22.4; 26.9-11.—*Went unto the high priest.* See Light from Oriental Life.

2. *And asked of him letters to Damascus.* These letters were his "authority and commission", Acts 26.12. So to-day the Sultan of Turkey issues a firman, or royal grant. Damascus was governed at this time by a foreign king (Aretas, King of Arabia), and Saul could reasonably expect a freer hand there than under Roman law in Judea.—*Unto the synagogues.* The followers of Christ had not yet separated themselves from the Jewish synagogues.—*Of the Way.*

A synonym for the Christian faith. The followers of Christ were not yet called Christians: Jesus had said, "I am the way", and those following in his footsteps naturally said that they were "of the Way". The metaphor of *the way* as referring to the mode of life is common in both the Old and the New Testaments, and prevails in various parts of the world to-day. "Is there anyone here who can tell me the Life road?" an aged native of Southern China asked a missionary. —*He might bring them bound to Jerusalem.* He intended bringing them back from Damascus bound to his chariot, and thus he would enter Jerusalem like a Roman conqueror. At Jerusalem they would be brought before the Sanhedrin for trial.



A Turkish Firman

3. *Suddenly there shone round about him a light out of heaven.* It was noonday, Acts 22.6, and the light was brighter than the sun, Acts 26.13.

4. *Heard a voice saying unto him.* I heard a voice saying unto me in the Hebrew language, Acts 26.14.—*Saul, Saul.* The repetition expresses emphasis.—*Why persecutest thou me.* In persecuting Christ's followers he had been persecuting Christ, Lk. 10.16; Mt. 25.40.

5. *Who art thou, Lord?* Κύριος Ἰησοῦς—Jesus is Lord—was the earliest creed of Christendom. "Saul had often before asked the question who Jesus was, yet it had been prejudice which asked it, while now it was conscience." In 1 Cor. 9.1 Paul tells us that within the light he saw Jesus himself, in his risen, glorified body. To him the Risen Christ was as objective and real as he was to the eleven apostles during the Forty Days after the Resurrection. This is the ground on which he claimed equal authority with the other apostles: see 1 Cor. 15.8; 2 Cor. 11.5; Gal. 2.8; Acts 22.21. "What sort of vision was it?" questions H. Weinel. "The answer to the question will vary according to a man's conception of the universe. The question has no existence for faith. Faith knows that what happened, happened in any case because God chose to work it thus—whether Paul really beheld Jesus in the light, or whether it was merely a visionary sight."—*It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.* This clause, in the AV, is omitted from the RV because it is not in the Greek manuscripts. A copyist is believed to have repeated it here in the Vulgate (whence it was translated in the AV) from Acts 22.10 and 26.14. See Light from Oriental Life.

6. *And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* And the Lord said unto him. These words in the Authorized Version are omitted from the RV: they are given in Paul's account, Acts 22.10.—*But rise.* See Paul's account in Acts 26.—*Enter into the city.* Into Damascus, whither he was going.—*And it shall be told thee what thou must do.* "There is nothing like an obedient to-day to reveal God's will to-morrow."

7. *Hearing the voice, but beholding no man.* Compare Dan. 10.7. In Acts 22.9 it says that "they heard not the voice": the explanation is that they heard the sound but not the words as Paul did: compare John 12.29.

10. *Ananias.* This is not the Ananias about whom we studied last quarter. A Labrador Eskimo named his baby Ananias, but he explained to the missionary that he was named "not after Ananias the liar, but after the good Ananias, who gave Saul back his sight." This Ananias was a devout man according to the law, well reported by all the Jews that dwelt at Damascus, Acts 22.12.

11. *The street which is called Straight.* See the Geographical Background. —*For behold, he prayeth.* Saul, as a strict Pharisee, must have prayed several times a day: the remarkable fact about his praying was that he was calling on the name of Jesus, verse 14.

12-16. Knowing full well Saul's persecution of believers in Jerusalem and his purpose in coming to Damascus, Ananias hesitated to obey the command. But when told that Saul had been chosen by Jesus to witness for him before "the Gentiles and kings and children of Israel" he went at once. "The con-

version of Saul was so startlingly sudden that the Christians could not persuade themselves it had actually taken place. But was it really as sudden as it looked? The vision on the way to Damascus was the explosion that laid Saul's Pharisaism in ruins; but who can read the seventh chapter of Romans, with its story of spiritual conflict, with its record of Saul's discovery of the inability of the law to bring him the righteousness he craved for, without seeing that God had for years been 'laying the train'—preparing Saul for the mighty change?" (*J. D. Jones*).

18. *There fell from his eyes as it were scales.* The Greek for scales is a technical medical term; one of the many proofs that Acts was written by Luke the physician.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

1. *Saul.* Saul is the famous old Hebrew name; turned into Greek it was Saulos. The like-sounding Greek name Paulos turned into English becomes Paul. It was the fashion for a Syrian or Cilician Jew who prided himself on his Greek knowledge, to have a Greek name. In like manner, pious Jews of the present day have two names.

1. *Saul* (a man of Tarsus, Cilicia), *yet breathing threatening and slaughter.* Dr. Adolf Deissmann recalls the religious and national fanaticism of the Mohammedans which broke out on the Cilician plain in 1909, when the population was decimated as far as Antioch in Syria and thousands of Armenian Christians fell victims to their fury, and he adds that the sultry, burning heat of that plain, brooding upon the soul of the people for centuries and centuries, has accumulated passions which, when the spark comes, go off in fire and sword, in "threatening and slaughter".

1. *Went unto the high priest.* An imperial edict of Julius Cæsar, in 47 B. C., decreed that "Hyrcanus and his children do retain all the rights of high priest, whether established by law or accorded by courtesy; if hereafter any question arises touching the Jewish polity I desire that the determination thereof be referred to him". Augustus confirmed this decree, and in the trial of Jesus we saw how the Romans allowed the high priest with the rest of the Sanhedrin the jurisdiction over civil and criminal cases (though not the power of carrying out a death penalty). This jurisdiction extended to Jews living in any part of Palestine and even beyond.

5. *It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.* This is a Greek and Latin as well as Jewish proverb, derived from the use of an ox-goad. The ox-goad is a pole seven to ten feet long, on one end of which is a broad, thin piece of iron used for cleaning the plowshare, and on the other a pointed iron, or "prick" used on the oxen instead of a whip. The plowshare is attached by a long pole to the yoke of the oxen, and the driver needs a long rod to reach them from where he stands to direct the plow. An unruly ox that begins to kick finds himself striking against the sharp prick. "Paul had been lashing out blindly, fiercely, like a restive ox, who fails to realize that the path he is to travel in is laid out before him, and that the One who controls him is both wiser and stronger than he. He feels the sharp prick of the steel-pointed goad, and at first only kicks the harder; till mere brute strength can bear the pain no longer, and the stronger, wiser will prevails."

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. Who was the first Christian martyr? What man is mentioned as consenting to his death? Was he in any way responsible for Stephen's death? What words of Stephen may Paul have kept in remembrance? What may have been the effect upon Paul of Stephen's words and spirit? What did he do after Stephen's death? To what did his persecutions lead? How was the Ethiopian officer led to ask the question, "Who art thou, Lord"? By what act did he acknowledge him to be the Christ, the Son of God? What did Peter tell the crowd at Pentecost that they must do to be saved? What have we learned about a man named Ananias? What visions have been recorded in Acts thus far? What Syrian general came from Damascus to see a prophet of Judea (one of our last year's lessons)? What did he say about two rivers of Damascus?

Saul the Persecutor. In our lesson about Stephen's martyrdom we caught a glimpse of his murderers laying aside their outer garments at the feet of the young man, Saul, who was gladly consenting to his death, and then afterwards we saw Saul laying waste the church, entering into every house, and dragging both men and women, committing them to prison. How his rage must have increased when he found that those who "were scattered abroad went about preaching the word", that his persecution of the church had only driven the Christians away from Jerusalem to spread elsewhere the knowledge of that Jesus whom he hated! With his anger, his fanatical zeal and determination to put down the heresy at whatever cost also grew apace. He threw all the energy of his great mind and heart into this work of persecution, for he was passionately earnest in his belief that Jesus was an impostor. No Gospel and no Epistle had yet been written, and he knew about Jesus only from his enemies. He believed that a Messiah was yet to come who would make Israel the dominant nation of the world; his Pharisaic pride would not let him consider the possibility of this lowly Nazarene, who had suffered death on the cross, being the promised Messiah. Yet another reason for his activity there may have been. Strong-minded, forceful men are often by the very doubts which lurk in the depths of their heart, pushed on to greater activity in a false direction.

Saul planned a campaign against the Christians beyond Palestine, but on his way to Damascus the event occurred which suddenly changed him from a persecuting Pharisee to a penitent Christian. Three accounts of his conversion are given in the Acts: in our lesson to-day, in 22.5-16, and in 26.12-18. Of course Paul must have told this story again and again, and not always in just the same words. The three accounts agree in essential particulars, but differ in details, "thus affording that mark of internal credibility—substantial truth combined with circumstantial variety."

The date of Paul's conversion is 36 A. D., according to the chronology here followed. Many scholars place the event earlier.

From Damascus to Tarsus. At once Paul began to preach in the synagogues of Damascus and proclaim that Jesus is the Son of God, to the great amazement of all who knew him as the arch-persecutor of believers at Jerusalem. It was probably at this time that he went to Arabia and remained three years, Gal. 1.17, 18, and upon his return to Damascus the Jews plotted to kill him. They kept watch for him at the gates of the city, but Paul learned of their plot and at night his disciples lowered him over the wall in a basket. He reached Jerusalem and tried to join the disciples but they were afraid of him until Barnabas brought him to the apostles and told them what had changed Paul on the way to Damascus. Here he preached boldly until his life was in danger, when the disciples conducted him to Cæsarea and sent him on his way to Tarsus. Here we leave him for a time, during which he was "unknown by face unto the churches in Judea," Gal. 1.22.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

There were several routes which Saul could have taken from Jerusalem to Damascus. One led northward to Shechem in Samaria, then on to Scythopolis in the Jordan Valley and across the Jordan below the Sea of Galilee, and then northeastward to Damascus. Instead of crossing the Jordan below the Sea of Galilee he could have continued around the western shore and crossed the river north of that lake, going on to Damascus by way of Cæsarea Philippi. Another route would have taken him from Jerusalem to Jericho and thence across the Jordan. The distance between the two places is about one hundred and thirty miles "as the crow flies".

Damascus is perhaps the oldest city in the world. We first hear of it in Abraham's time. It has a fine situation in a fertile plain at the foot of the Anti-Lebanon Mountains, on the highway of traffic with the East, and through it run the clear waters of the Barada river, the Abana of Naaman's day. Tradition long located the scene of Paul's conversion six miles southwest of the city, but now a site more convenient for visitors is shown not far from a house on the wall credited with being the one from which Paul escaped in a basket, verse 25. In a graveyard belonging to the Greek Orthodox Church is a "Shrine of St. George", a Christian Abyssinian officer, who is said to have helped

Paul make his escape, and there a stone marks the traditional spot of the vision.

The street called Straight was in Paul's time a beautiful avenue one hundred feet wide, running directly through the city from east to west, and divided by Corinthian columns into three roadways. Now it makes several turns and is roofed over, but it is still the widest and most important thoroughfare of the city, being lined with shops. Over the gateway of a courtyard is an inscription "San Ananiæ Domus", The House of St. Ananias, and within the courtyard a subterranean grotto which is now used by the Franciscans as a chapel. It has altars and pictures representing the vision and the baptism of Paul.

Saul was a native of Tarsus. Tarsus is in Cilicia, Asia Minor; thirty miles to the north stretches the long white chain of the Taurus Mountains, with the pass so famous in the world's history known as the Cilician Gates; twenty miles south the waves of the Mediterranean lap the shore. It was "no mean city", Paul said; her coins claim the distinction of being the Metropolis of the East. It was one of the great university towns of the time, and Strabo tells us that "the inhabitants had such zeal for philosophy and education as to exceed Athens and Alexandria". Sir William M. Ramsay concludes an interesting account of the university with this reference to Paul: "The crowning glory of Taurus, the reason for its undying interest to the whole world, is that it produced the Apostle Paul; that it was the one city which was suited by its equipoise between the Asiatic and the Western spirit to mould the character of the great Hellenist Jew". There are few remains of the ancient city, but the natives in digging for the ancient stones on the site of the old city wall near "St. Paul's Gate" have found terra cotta and coins of Paul's time. Electricity now lights the streets, the power being obtained from the falls of the Cydnus River.

Coin of Tarsus

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

What is the purpose of Sunday school instruction? In classes of children it should render conversion as adults needless. In adult classes the leader's objective should be to make that class a place where God may find hearts responsive to his call.

Although Paul the saint humbly acknowledged himself the chief of sinners, Sunday school teachers will not seek to arouse a similar feeling in their pupils' hearts. They will teach young children, children so young that they have not wilfully sinned, the fact that they are God's children now, that they must stay with Jesus (rather than "come to Jesus"). It was the grown-ups in byways and hedges that Jesus would have *compelled* to come into the kingdom: of little children he said, *Suffer* them to come unto me, and *forbid* them not. Little children should be so trained that their Christian life will be an evolution, not a revolution.

Teachers are all familiar with the oft-repeated statement that there are three periods when young lives are especially susceptible to the Divine call—the ages of 9 to 12, 14 and 15, 17 and 18. With some, especially with those living in Christian homes and under good influences in church and Sunday-school, the love of God becomes imperceptibly a part of their lives; their Christian life begins simply and quietly. Where there has been no conscious decision, teachers will have the opportunity to-day to press home the reality and the need of a conscious turning to God.

Prayerful and careful study is necessary to enable a teacher so to present the claims of Christ as to win immediate response. Under the Third Topic teachers of pupils of all ages will find helpful illustrations.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger and Older Pupils. Question your pupils about Stephen's martyrdom and emphasize Saul's responsibility for his death. Recall Saul's persecution of the Church. Then tell them how Ruskin bids us notice that the common mud from the streets of a manufacturing city is composed of clay, sand, soot, and water, and that the clay can be transformed into the sapphire, the sand changed into the opal, the soot crystalized into the diamond, and the water changed into a star of snow. Just as wonderful is the transformation of Saul, the haughty, self-righteous, persecuting Pharisee, into Paul the humble, penitent, zealous follower of Christ.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Conscientious Zealots

Fifteenth Century Zealots. In the year that Ferdinand and Isabella furnished Columbus with the means to start forth to discover a new world, these Christian rulers of Spain issued a decree ordering the execution of any unbaptized Jew found in their country after one hundred and twenty days. In their zeal for the Christian religion they thought that in persecuting the Jews they were doing the will of God. A wealthy Jew offered them an enormous sum of money to be used for their kingdom if they would annul the decree. Fearing they might yield, the monk Torquemada, whom they had appointed Inquisitor-general of Spain, sought an interview with them, and holding up a crucifix exclaimed, "Judas sold his Master for thirty pieces of silver. Sell him again for a higher price, and give to God an account of your bargain." During sixteen years of Torquemada's rule, over eight thousand victims were given to the flames, ninety thousand were condemned to perpetual imprisonment, and over eight hundred thousand Jews were expelled from Spain. All this was done in the name of Christ! As conscientious as these Christians of the fifteenth century in persecuting the Jews, was Saul the Jew of the first century in persecuting the Christians.

Abdallah and Sabat. The *Evangelical Christian* prints a thrilling story of martyrdom and its aftermath which Dr. Harlan P. Beach in the *Sunday School Times* entitles "A Moslem Saul and Stephen Story." Abdallah and Sabat were Mohammedan friends. Abdallah went to Kabul where he became a Christian through reading a Bible. Knowing that he would be put to death if he renounced Mohammedanism, and that he was in danger of being discovered where he was, he fled to the Caspian Sea. On the streets of Bokhara he met Sabat, who had heard of his friend's conversion, and was filled with indignation. Abdallah fell at Sabat's feet and implored him on the ground of their old friendship, to allow him to escape with his life. Sabat was obdurate, and, as he said when in tears he related later the events of martyrdom:

"I had no pity. I caused my servant to seize him, and I delivered him up to Morad Shah, king of Bokhara. He was sentenced to die, and a herald went through the city announcing the time of his execution. He was offered his life if he would abjure Christ, the executioner standing by him with his sword in his hand. He made no answer, but looked up steadfastly toward heaven, like Stephen, the first martyr, his eyes streaming with tears. He did not look with anger toward me. He looked at me, but it was benignly and with a countenance of forgiveness. And when he bowed his head to receive the stroke of death he never changed,—he never changed. All Bokhara seemed to say, 'What new thing is this?'"

Sabat had hoped that Abdallah would recant when offered his life if he would do so. When he looked upon the body of his handless, headless friend, he was a victim of the keenest remorse. He traveled everywhere trying to find peace and happiness, but all in vain. Finally in India an Arabic New Testament came into his hands. He compared it carefully with his Koran, and at last, became convinced of the truth of Christianity and was baptized.

Now a strong desire filled his soul to labor for Moslems. As a literary man he wrote his first work in the common dialect of his native land, which was entitled, "Happy News for Arabia". Later he undertook a better translation of the New Testament into Persian, which is widely known in Western Asia.

Like Saul, who was consenting to the death of the proto-martyr Stephen, this modern convert is an illustration of the strength of Moslem fanaticism toward perverts, and also of the steadfastness of these same Moslems when once possessed by the spirit of their Savior.

II The Sense of Sin

The Chief of Sinners. If you had been asked to name the greatest of sinners, would you have named the Apostle Paul? And yet he it is who writes about "sinners, of whom I am chief". How did it come to pass that Paul so judged himself? It was not affected humility, nor was it a mere rhetorical flourish, this statement of his. His standard of judgment was not his fellowmen, but Jesus Christ himself. He had seen himself in his Savior's light on the road to Damascus, and recalling how he had tried to make the saints blaspheme, being exceedingly mad against them (Acts 26.11, 14), and realizing that in persecuting them he had been persecuting Christ himself, he perceived the blackness of his guilt. So Peter, in the light of his Master's wonderful power, had fallen at Jesus' knees, exclaiming, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord."

Then, too, Paul was a comparatively old man when he wrote those words in his letter to Timothy, and when a good man is nearing the end of his life's course he becomes very humble, knowing what he is at heart and knowing, too, what his Lord would have him be in his circumstances and with his opportunities. It was of himself before he met the Savior that Paul wrote in his letter to the Philippians, that he was "as touching the righteousness which is in the law found blameless". The blamelessness was at the beginning of his life's course; the sense of sin, at the end. His life's race was well won when he felt that he had fallen so far short of his calling in Christ Jesus that he needed God's atoning mercy more than those who had not received so much light and grace.

The Unusual Way. Daniel Wester once spent a summer in New Hampshire, and every Sunday went to a little country church, morning and evening. His niece asked him why he went there, when he paid little attention to far abler sermons in Washington. He replied: "In Washington they preach to Daniel Webster, the statesman, but this man has been telling Daniel Webster, the sinner, of Jesus of Nazareth."

The Usual Way. The minister had just finished his great sermon. The air still quivered with his burning words, and the people sat erect, disturbed, embarrassed; yet still he lingered a moment in his place. "Is there," he asked, "one here in whose breast these words strike like a barbed arrow, for the truth that is in them?" and he sat down. "That was hard on John," said old James; "but he deserves it, every word". "A blow from the shoulder for James!" said old John; "time he got one, too, if it is not too late". "I wonder if either of those two old sinners will take his medicine and be helped by it?" said old William. But the little saint, the little saint, hurried home, and knelt by her little bed, and cried aloud in her anguish: "My God, my God, have mercy on me, and give me for this stone a heart of flesh!" *Laura E. Richards.*

A Certainty About Jesus Christ. Faithful is the saying, and worthy of all acceptation, wrote Paul in his letter to Timothy. A faithful saying is one absolutely true—a verity. And that which Paul says is absolutely certain, is that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. Once for all, God in Christ Jesus has met and conquered our enemies of sin and death, and that for us. For those of us who know what sin is, what our own sins are, for us this is a word true and precious.

III Conversion

Paul's Conversion. Paul had been convinced by that shameful death on the cross, that the man Jesus was an impostor who had degraded and brought into contempt the most sacred belief of the Jews, the belief in a coming Messiah and in an elevation of the whole race once more to its rightful position in the world. Now take into account Paul's nature. He was fully possessed by all the Jewish obstinate and fervent belief in what he considered right. What process of reasoning would have convinced such a man? What argument would have weighed with him? Human reasoning and testimony could have no effect on

Paul, as he describes his own condition. He was suddenly convinced: Christ seized him: the power of God irradiated him. He recognized as living in the Divine glory the man whom he had believed to be a dead impostor. He was a witness that Jesus was living.

It was a sudden, unprepared, completely revolutionizing change. Nothing had been in his mind consciously that seemed to prepare the way for it. He was sailing on a diametrically opposite course. Suddenly he was seized by a higher power, and set on a new course. Yet it was the most real, as well as the most powerful issue in his life. He never could doubt about its meaning or its character. The Divine Power had taken hold of him, and swayed him as God chose. This is what Paul says; this is what he thought. *Condensed* from *The Teaching of Paul in Terms of the Present Day,* by *Sir W. M. Ramsay.*

Not a Standard. Paul, himself, does not appear to have taken his own experience as a standard of conversion. He told the story of it in his own defense, but his ordinary preaching appears to have kept it in the background. There is little if any evidence that he demanded striking conversion phenomena in others, or that he commonly witnessed them in his converts. *Professor George Albert Coe.*

The Child's Day of Decision. The current idea of the churches, which has only just begun to be dislodged, that adult conversion is the type and intended rule of Christianity, comes largely from the fact that the first preachers of Christianity had of necessity to be largely occupied with men who had known nothing of Christianity in their youth. Peter and Paul had to go to grown up men and ask them to begin Christian life. But surely that was not to be the perpetual picture of Christian culture.

A child's religion is no monstrous thing. It is no priggish and unpleasant aping of what is possible only for the maturer life. It is a true child who loves God and sees everything beautiful in him, who loves the Church and finds its ways and forms full of significance and pleasure, and who hears and accepts as part of the story of the world which it is gradually learning to know, the story of how God loved that world, so that he came into it and lived here and died here, to help every man to live in holiness and to save every man when he falls into sin. There is no child for whom that religion is impossible. Brave, true, frank, gentle, joyous, what is better than this in the labored religion of our later days? It is not only a promise, it is a present reality. The boy is not only a little man, he is a boy, with his own present capacity of character. He is even now, "a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of Heaven." *Condensed* from *Visions and Tasks,* by *Phillips Brooks.*

A Boy's Day of Decision. It was a day in spring, a Saturday, and the mill-hands in the New England village stopped work at noon. Forth from the stocking-mill where he labored came Charley Jordan, happy to be out in the spring air with a half-holiday at his disposal. Half-way down the street, he met his Sunday-school teacher, who stopped him for a moment, spoke pleasantly of the fine spring weather, asked him a question about his work, inquired if he would be in Sunday-school next day, and passed on. Then, wavering a moment in her own mind, she turned with sudden impulse and faced him again.

"Charley," she asked, "don't you think it is time for you to take a stand for the best things—I mean, you know, the things of the Christian life?"

He had heard sermons all his life, and was not unmoved by them, but this simple, direct word of his teacher touched a sudden chord in his heart. He was fifteen, more than two-thirds of twenty-one. Life was pleasant to look forward to; the thing he was asked to do was a pleasant and beautiful one. He thought a moment, and then said:

"Yes, Mrs. Beale, I think it is time. I will do it."

He went to his home, as he had often gone before, and yet not the same. He had made a great decision, and had something to live up to. He had always been a clean boy and a thoughtful boy. He had few bad habits to unlearn or serious faults to forsake. What had he promised to do, and how was he to go about it, and what did it all amount to, anyway ? When a man has been thoroughly bad, and makes such a decision, his course is reasonably clear; but what about a boy who has always been a good boy?

As to his outer conduct, it was not greatly different from before. But more resolutely he sought association with the better things about him. New and

larger aspirations took possession of him, and found new impulse from within. He drew better books from the library and sought the fellowship of the best young people.

He is still a young man, relatively speaking; but he has reached a position of influence and usefulness second to that of no man in the city where he now resides. Very recently, to a close friend, he told the story to the moment when, a care-free boy, whistling his way home from the factory, he paused to meet the simple question of his Sunday-school teacher, a question which she had asked with fluttering heart, and almost forbore to ask at all.

"It was the very opportune moment," said he, "and although I was in no serious danger of going to the bad, it kindled within me a new aspiration, born of a new ideal". *Condensed* from *The Youth's Companion.*

A Girl's Day of Decision. A thoughtful girl of sixteen years, living in the country at a distance from the church, which made attendance irregular, read on a Sunday, the memoir of a Christian woman. On closing the volume, she said to herself: "That was a beautiful life". And after a little thought, she added: "And I should like to live such a life". A few minutes later she kneeled down and said: "Lord, I will try from this time". The decision was made. She went on steadily, and is still a useful and influential Christian woman, honored and beloved, and widely known for her beautiful and devoted character. *Dr. G. B. F. Hallock.*

A Man's Day of Decision. A man looks at his own heart and God, and sees his real self. Then he registers a solemn vow that the old life shall be ended, and henceforth he will be on the side of the Lord. Now that moment of decision is a moment of infinite significance. Its influence cannot be measured. I am afraid that decisions for Christ are often made in partial thoughtlessness, or at any rate not with that deep seriousness and gravity which the occasion demands. They are often made in circumstances which are vague and unimpressive. And so the decision is carved lightly, when it ought to be graven deep.

I have known people who have decided for Christ, but the decision has been so lightly made that it was like a resolution written in sand, which the first strong wave of temptation wiped utterly away. Now I would invest the act of decision with great solemnity. I would surround it with everything that is calculated to inspire awe and deep soberness of mind. I would make it as solemn as a death-bed scene, for what else is it but a death-bed scene? When a man decides for Christ, it is the death of the old life! He is closing a volume. He is ringing the knell of a wasted past, and the act ought to be performed with an impressiveness which will remain engraved upon his mind forever.

Let me go more into detail. Take a pen in your hand, and on your knees write out your decision. Let it be something like this: "In the presence of my Savior I now resolve that this moment shall mark a turning-point in my life. I will arise and go to my Father". I know of nothing which could be more impressive than for a man to be alone, in his own chamber, upon his knees, writing out a solemn pledge, a great moral decision. It would be a moment, the influence of which would follow him to his dying day. I am concerned that a man's decision should be registered deep, in characters that can never be effaced, and I point out to you a plain course which I know will help to this attainment.

Then, after the decision, what then? "He went to his father." He threw himself, with all his sins and wants, upon the father's love. He made a full, frank, manly, yet humble confession of his waywardness and sin, and then flung himself, in all his helpfulness, upon the father's mercy. Decision must be followed by absolute submission. Arise, and go to your Father, and tell him that you are his unworthy son, and ask him to take you home, into the habitation of purity and truth. Arise, and just go to your Father, and tell him that you have resolved to give up your past life, that henceforth you want to be numbered among the pure and good, that you don't know how it all is to be accomplished, but that there is One who has promised to take the work into his own hands, and you humbly leave it all with him, with Jesus of Nazareth, the friend of publicans and sinners!

What then?—

If I ask him to receive me, will he say me nay?
Not till earth and not till heaven pass away.

Condensed from a *Sermon* by *Dr. J. H. Jowett.*

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

You may avoid the church, you may avoid the Bible, you may avoid the company of Christian people, but you can not avoid Jesus Christ: he will meet you where you least think of him. *Dr. W. J. Dawson.*

It is of little moment when or where or how you have been converted: the great question is, Are you converted, have you made the great decision? There are those who have had an overwhelming sense of sin and a sudden, definite sense of divine forgiveness; there are others who have been led to God by a gradual appreciation of his goodness and can not tell the day when first they knew and loved and served him. "Some people are converted like the flashing of a meteor; with others it is like the rising of the morning sun, and you can not tell the minute it was light", Mr. Moody was wont to say. We need not question our own spiritual experiences because they differ from those of others. We need only ask ourself if we have accepted Jesus as our Savior and having dedicated ourselves to his service, if we are making God's will our law.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Was Saul's conversion the result of a sudden perception that he was fighting on the wrong side, or was it a final yielding of his will for which he had been prepared by meditation on Stephen's words and death?

2. Varieties of Religious Experience. See Professor Henry James' book bearing this title, or Dr. F. A. Noble's "Typical New Testament Conversions"; Chapter VIII of "Revival Sermons" by Wilbur Chapman; Chapter III of "Studies of Paul and his Gospel" by A. E. Garvie; What Christianity Changes, Homiletic Review, March, 1915, p. 250.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. In how many districts has the witnessing for Christ now been given? (Acts 9.31.) 2. What reasons are given in Acts 9.31 for the growth of the Church? 3. What two reasons can you give for the cessation of persecution at this time? (*Guide,* p. 166.) 4. What can you learn about Joppa? (*Guide,* p. 166.) 5. Where was Lydda? 6. What is said in Isaiah 35.2 about Sharon? 7. What is the seaport of Jerusalem to-day? 8. What have the followers of Jesus been called before this lesson in Acts? (1.15; 2.44; 5.14; 6.1; 9.2, 13.) 9. Compare Peter's words in verse 34 with Jesus' words to the palsied man, Mt. 9.6. (Guide, ¶ 3, p. 165.) 10. Describe a bed such as the palsied man had and the way it was made. (*Guide* p. 165.) 11. To what did the cure of Æneas lead? 12. What earlier miracle had been wrought through Peter and to whom did he ascribe the power? (Acts 4.9, 10.) 13. What is the meaning of Tabitha and Dorcas? (Footnote of Bible.) 14. Compare Peter's raising of Dorcas with Jesus' raising of the daughter of Jairus. (Mk. 5.35-43; *Guide,* ¶ 3, p. 165.) 15. What was the oriental custom in regard to burial? (*Guide,* p. 165.)

Questions to Think About. 1. In what sense is the word "saints" used in verse 32? (*Guide,* p. 164.) 2. What is the meaning of "which by interpretation is called Dorcas"? 3. Why was Peter sent for? 4. For whom would you send if you were in trouble? 5. Whose daughter did Jesus raise to life which the restoration of Dorcas recalls? (Mk. 5.35-43.) 6. What did the fact that Peter took up his abode with a tanner prove? (*Guide,* p. 165.) 7. What is a Dorcas Society? 8. What is a good work? 9. For what good works have you opportunity? 10. Are you looking for opportunities to do good work? 11. What good works are your class and your Sunday-school doing? 12. Have you done anything for the Surplus Department of the World's Sunday School Association?

Note Book Work. Begin a Life of Paul. Write Chapter 1, Paul's Conversion.

ÆNEAS AND DORCAS

Golden Text

In all things showing thyself an ensample of good works. Titus 2.7

LESSON Acts 9.32-43; (compare also Proverbs 31.10-31)
MEMORIZE verses 39, 40

32 And it came to pass, as Peter went throughout all parts, he came down also to the saints that dwelt at Lydda. 33 And there he found a certain man named Æneas, who had kept his bed eight years; for he was palsied. 34 And Peter said unto him, Æneas, Jesus Christ healeth thee: arise and make thy bed. And straightway he arose. 35 And all that dwelt at Lydda and in Sharon saw him, and they turned to the Lord.

36 Now there was at Joppa a certain disciple named Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas: this woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did. 37 And it came to pass in those days, that she fell sick, and died: and when they had washed her, they laid her in an upper chamber. 38 And as Lydda was nigh unto Joppa, the disciples, hearing that Peter was there, sent two men unto him, entreating him, Delay not to come on unto us. 39 And Peter arose and went with them. And when he was come, they brought him into the upper chamber: and all the widows stood by him weeping, and showing the coats and garments which Dorcas made, while she was with them. 40 But Peter put them all forth, and kneeled down, and prayed; and turning to the body, he said, Tabitha, arise. And she opened her eyes; and when she saw Peter, she sat up. 41 And he gave her his hand, and raised her up; and calling the saints and widows, he presented her alive. 42 And it became known throughout all Joppa: and many believed on the Lord. 43 And it came to pass, that he abode many days in Joppa with one Simon a tanner.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

I. The Healing of Æneas, 32-35.
II. The Raising of Dorcas, 36-42.
III. Peter Tarries with a Tanner, 43.

32. *As Peter went throughout all parts.* "Like a commander of an army he went about inspecting the ranks" (*Chrysostom*).—*The saints.* The Greek word means literally *the holy ones.* We apply the word to those who are distinguished by extraordinary piety, but it is used here by Luke as synonymous with the word *Christians.* The saint was one who was trying to obey the will of God and to work in his kingdom: every disciple was a saint in that sense of the word. Paul uses it contantly in this sense.

33-34. *Æneas.* A Greek name.—*Jesus Christ healeth thee.* Recall Acts 4.10. —*Arise and make thy bed.* Compare Jesus' words to the palsied man, Mt. 9.6. "In both these miracles Peter's endeavor to assimilate his action to his Master's is plain".—*And straightway he arose.* "We have come to believe too many things which at first seemed beyond belief, to be hastily turned from any thing which brings us reasonable credentials" (*McKenzie*).

36. *Named Tabitha. Tabitha* is an Aramaic name meaning *Gazelle;* it was probably given because she possessed large, lustrous eyes.—*Which by interpretation is called Dorcas.* Translated into Greek, the name became Dorcas.—*Full of good works and almsdeeds which she did.* "A woman whose life was full of good actions and of charitable practices" (*Moffatt*). Orientals say that "All is vanity which is not bread." "The noblest question in the world is, What good may I do in it?" *Benjamin Franklin*).

37. *In those days.* While Peter was at Lydda.—*They laid her in an upper chamber.* See p. 165.

THE CHARITY OF DORCAS

From a Painting by W. C. T. Dobson

38. *Delay not to come on unto us.* Did they expect Peter to restore her to life, or did they only feel the need of his presence and sympathy?

39. *All the widows.* Doubtless those whom Dorcas had aided.—*Weeping and showing the coats and garments which Dorcas had made.* The coats were the tunics, or undergarments: the garments were the loose outer robes which were fastened by girdles. "There are a good many women who, when they die, will not have much crying at their funerals, for all the garments they leave behind them were made for themselves" (*Margaret Bottome*).

40. *Peter put them all forth.* Compare the raising of Jairus' daughter by Jesus, Mark 5.35-43. "Peter remembered how our Lord had cleared a death-chamber of noisy, professional wailers, and so he put forth the true mourners from the upper room where Dorcas was lying dead. He remembered the very Aramaic words with which Jesus had raised Jairus' daughter, which are preserved to us in the Gospel which, in some sense, is supposed to be his: and again, he pleased himself, in a naive and innocent fashion, by copying their very sound, and for that purpose availed himself of the Jewish, rather than of the Greek name of the dead woman. Thinking of '*Talitha cumi*', he said to her '*Tabitha cumi*'—the change of one letter" (*Alexander Maclaren*).

43. *He abode many days with one Simon a tanner.* Jewish law decreed that the tanner's house must be on the outskirts of a town, for there was no calling so repugnant to a Jew as that of a tanner. There had been a time when Peter would have slept out of doors rather than enter a tanner's abode: his Jewish exclusiveness was being shaken. In India they have a saying that "A Brahman and an ox are nearer akin than a Brahman and a leather-worker".

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

34. *Make thy bed.* Bedsteads like ours have never been in use in Palestine. In the better houses there is a raised platform at one end of the sleeping room and on this the bed is made, but in the poorer homes the bed is made on the floor of the one room. The bed consists of a mat, or rug, or sheep-skins sewed together, or a mattress made by stuffing a quilted coverlet with wool. On rising, the bed is made by rolling it up. In the Greek the word bed is not expressed and the words στρῶσον σεαυτῷ, translated *make thy bed*, means literally, *spread for thyself;* the palsied man is directed to do for himself what others have long had to do for him.

36. *Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas.* Perhaps Tabitha was never called Dorcas, but it was not unusual for the Jews to have both a Hebrew (Aramaic) and a Greek name, especially in a seaport town like Joppa, where there were both Jews and Greeks.

37. *When they had washed her, they laid her in an upper chamber.* Because the body begins to decay soon after death in the warm climate of Palestine, as well as because of the Mosaic law concerning defilement arising from contact with a dead body (Num. 19.11), it has always been customary to bury the dead on the day of death. Lydda was so near that there was evidently time for Peter to arrive before nightfall, and it was not uncommon to bury the dead at night if death occurred after sunset. Ordinarily the body is washed, wrapped in spices and cloth, and wound round and round with bandages. It was customary to have hired mourners, but in this case their place was taken by the widows whom Dorcas had aided. The upper chamber was the guest chamber, built on the roof of the house.

43. *A tanner.* To touch a dead animal made a Jew "unclean" according to their laws, and tanners were therefore obliged to have their dwelling apart from others on the edge of the town. "The world cannot get along without tanners", said the rabbis, "but woe unto him who is a tanner". A woman whose husband became a tanner after her marriage to him, could obtain a divorce.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. What were the Christians called in our last lesson? Who had been the chief persecutor of the Christians? What effect must his conversion have had upon the troubles of the Church? Who was the chief character of our last lesson? Of the last lesson of the last Quarter? How long is it since we have heard about Peter? What have we heard this year about

Peter's activities in the Church? What was the first miracle wrought through Peter? What Old Testament prophet restored the dead to life (one of last year's lessons)? What Old Testament prophet started from Joppa on a voyage to escape going to Nineveh (another lesson of last year)?

Reasons for the Cessation of Persecution. The events of our lesson occurred when the followers of Christ had peace throughout Palestine. The persecution that followed Stephen's death ceased for a time. Saul, the chief persecutor, had become himself a Christian. Probably there was also another reason for the cessation of hostilities. Between 37 and 41 A. D. Caligula (Caius Cæsar) was the Roman Emperor, and Josephus in his "Antiquities" has recorded the trouble which he occasioned the Jews. They were so occupied with this, that they had no time to concern themselves with the growth of the apostolic church. Caligula ordered Petronius, the proconsul of Syria, to erect his statue in the temple at Jerusalem, and dedicate it as to a god. Petronius came to Ptolemais, and there "ten thousands of the Jews" came to beseech him not to carry out his purpose. Here, and again at Tiberias, where Petronius went with his followers, the Jews declared that they would die before they would see their laws transgressed, and their temple thus dishonored. Throwing themselves on the ground before him, they affirmed that they were ready to be slain, but they would never yield in the matter. The war which seemed imminent between the Jews and the Romans was averted by the opportune death of Caligula.

The Growth of the Church. The Church had peace throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, Acts 9.31. This is the only reference in Acts to the spread of the Christian faith in Galilee. Luke's object is to show how, by a series of developments, the small sect of Judaism became a world-wide Christian Church, and the preaching in Galilee was merely like that in Judea.

Not only did the followers of Jesus increase in numbers, but they grew in character, for they lived in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit. The care and supervision of the churches, scattered here and there during this period of rapid expansion, fell to the apostles, for the new Christian communities needed counsel and instruction. Luke gives a typical account of an apostolic journey made by Peter. The stories of healing and of raising from the dead which constitute our lesson show how certain Peter had become of the power of God working through him.

The date of this journey is uncertain. It may have been 39 or 40 A. D., or even as early as 37 A. D.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The two cities of Joppa and Lydda are on the Plain of Sharon, that part of the Maritime Plain lying between Carmel and Joppa. It was this district which Philip had traveled on his preaching tour from Azotus to Cæsarea.

Joppa was then, as now, the seaport of Jerusalem, thirty miles away, with which it is now connected by a railroad. The modern name of the city is Jaffa. Joppa means Beautiful, and very attractive the city looks from the deck of an approaching steamer, its white, flat-roofed houses climbing the terraced side of the hill and embedded in orange and lemon and palm trees, and over all the clear azure sky for a canopy. Joppa was a very old city at the time Peter visited it. Under the name of Ja-pu it is listed at Karnak as one of the cities of Canaan conquered by the Pharaoh Thothmes III about 1600 B. C. It was to this place that Hiram king of Tyre sent cedars of Lebanon for Solomon's Temple; it was from here that Jonah set sail for Tarshish, instead of going to Nineveh. And it was here that Simon the Tanner and Dorcas lived.

At the inn where we stayed the rooms are named instead of numbered, and I was glad to be quartered in the room called Tabitha. The site of her house is covered by a Greek Church, and near by is a rock-cut tomb claimed to be hers. In the southern quarter of Jaffa we visited the traditional house of Simon the Tanner. In the courtyard there is an ancient stone vat such as the dyers have always used. An outside stairway leads to the flat roof, where one has just such a view of the sea as Peter had in his vision, recorded in our next lesson.

Lydda was "nigh unto Joppa", now eleven miles away on the railroad. After the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A. D. it was famed as the place where the great Jewish rabbis expounded the law.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

What a very large number of men and women there are in all our churches who do not count! They are respectable people, even good people, but they do not take an office, they do not teach a Sunday-school class, they do not help in any of the organizations or meetings or activities, they do not give themselves in any way to the work of the Church. Where lies the fault? In part it can be traced to the Sunday school teachers who did not teach them when young that they must be about their Father's business. Are you guiltless of such a charge? In what definite Christian activities are you encouraging and leading your pupils?

Traditional House of Simon the Tanner, Showing Stone Vat and Stairway Leading to Roof

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. In India it is a common sight to see a feeble old man, his body emaciated and covered with ashes, his hair matted with grease, leaning on a trident, and carrying on one arm a leopard skin, and accompanied by his *"chela"*, or disciple, also begrimed with ashes, who carries a begging-bowl. They approach a group of men, and the old man sinks painfully to the ground and points a shaking finger at the passers-by. One of them drops a coin into the bowl and kneels reverently before the old man, who places his hand on his head, then raises it toward heaven and mumbles a prayer and once more lets it rest on the head of the man before him. The man then rises and goes on his way rejoicing, for he believes that good luck will follow him; has he not been blessed by a *Yogi,* or Hindu saint? What a contrast between such saints and such superstition and the saints at Lydda and Joppa who blessed others with their good works! The followers of Christ are called saints here, as earlier they were called brethren or believers, and later were called Christians. Paul begins his letter to the Romans by saying "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called an apostle...to all that are in Rome, beloved of God, called saints", and *saints* is a favorite name of his for all those who believed in Jesus Christ.

For Older Pupils. Begin with the Historical Background.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Ensamples of Good Works

What is a "Good Work"? One boy answers, "It is clever work". That seems a good answer, for anything that has brains in it, that is strikingly clever, must be good. But think a minute. A man cheated a bank not long ago of a great sum of money, and when the papers told us about it they said it was cleverly done. But though it was clever, you would not call it "good".

Another boy says, "It is valuable, costly work". Well, if a thing is worth a lot of money it ought to be good; but that does not always happen. Here is a picture, for instance, which is a great work of art. Its coloring, the way it is done, make it a masterpiece, and it is worth thousands of pounds. But it suggests evil things, and taints the minds of men. So, though it is costly, you would not call it a "good work".

A little girl says "It is something well done". Again that sounds all right, for if work instead of being carelessly, badly done, is properly finished, it ought to be good. But is it? The man who built our Savior's cross made it properly. It was well done, the wood well shaped, and the crosspiece nailed se-

curely. He made a good job of it, that old-world carpenter, but you would not call it "a good work", would you?

Some one else says, "It is work which men praise", which stirs men to admiration and applause. That again is not a very safe answer, for the deeds men praise are not always good. A man may fly his aeroplane over a great city, and drop bombs and destroy buildings and slaughter people. Now, to his own army, that man is a hero, and his nation will praise him for his skill and daring; but you would not call it a good work to do a thing like that.

Now, if you want to know things, you cannot find a better teacher than Jesus, and he can tell us what good work is. Once a woman took a box of precious ointment and broke it over him. People who saw her do it said it was a shocking thing to do, such a bad waste of money. But Jesus said, "She has wrought a good work on me". And when we examine her deed, we find these three things—it was done for Christ's sake; it did him good; and it was done in a spirit of self-sacrifice. It was not done to please herself or win praise, but because she loved him. It helped and comforted Jesus, and it was sacrificing one of her most precious possessions just to help him. A good work has good thought, good motive, good aim. We can all do a good work like that. Not every boy and girl can do the clever, the perfect, the costly, the heroic, but all of us can do the thing that helps and do it for Christ's sake. Hurry up, then, and do it. Don't wait till you are as old as Dorcas, don't wait till you know how to make garments, or have plenty of money to give away. Do good works now. *C. E. Stone,* in *Sunday School Chronicle.*

The Girl Guides. In England the sister organization of the Boy Scouts is called the Girl Guides. At this writing there are ten thousand English girls doing all they can to help their country in its time of stress. An account speaks of their thoroughly cleaning a house at Leeds that was being turned into a military hospital, of doing the mending and darning for a regiment of territorials in Hertfordshire; of making puzzles to amuse convalescent soldiers, and sewing newspapers together to line winter blankets at Crawlet. At the London refugee camps for homeless Belgians, the girls act as nurses for the children. At Harrow, they are raising vegetables for the poor. And every Red Cross hospital has its corps of Girl Guides, who wash dishes, do general cleaning, run errands, and do all they can to help the doctors and nurses.

Which is the Best Example? An article upon Christian and Buddhist Ideals in "The East and the West" gives these three pictures:

One is a little room on the top story of a tenement in a slum near the Regent's Canal. The owner of the attic, in her simple deaconess dress, greets the visitor with a radiant smile. She has left a home of ease, and spends her time in helping the sick and visiting the poor. She has found her ideal, and followed it. Another picture, this time from China, is of a tiny cell in a Buddhist monastery, where a Buddhist monk has sat for many years. He has taken a vow of complete silence, and never opens his lips. What a mistaken idea of a God of Love, to think that he should give the gift of speech in order to have it thus thrown away! The third is the picture of a Hindu fakir. He has a long wooden board dotted over with spikes, and on these he has sat or lain for more than five years. His religion (partly influenced, no doubt, by Buddhism), has landed him in exactly the same quagmire as the Chinese monk. Compare the three ideals!

A Good Deeds Box. In a progressive Sunday-school in Rochester, New York, the children are taking a new interest in noticing the noble and helpful things that other folks do. The secret is a "Good Deeds Box", which provides fun for the children while they unconsciously develop character.

The Good Deeds Box is the especial interest of children in the Primary department who can write, though there are doubtless teachers of the juniors who might also use it to advantage. The method is simple. The children are requested by the teacher to be on the lookout for good deeds during the week. The accounts of the good deeds are to be written by the children on slips of paper, and signed. The following Sunday the slips are brought to Sunday-school and deposited in the Box, which occupies a conspicuous place on the teacher's table.

In the Rochester school the teacher reads the slips immediately after the opening devotional exercises. There is no need to ask for order or quiet. Interest and curiosity hold ten or twelve little boys spell-bound. As she reads

the slips the teacher speaks a word of approval, which adds to the pleasure of the little people.

One condition is observed. No one must record a good deed of his own. This is the crux of the whole matter. If the teacher finds something like this: "I minded the baby for mother", or "I chopped a big pile of kindling", the records of self-praise are not read. The silent rebuke is effective. *Jane Ellis Joy,* in *Sunday School Times.*

II Philanthropy

A Life Superbly Invested. The noblest question in the world is, said Benjamin Franklin, "What good may I do in it"? That question was seemingly ever present in the thought of Miss Grace Dodge, a New York woman, who gave her inherited wealth—which she called "her wages earned in advance"—and herself so freely for others. "She always had time to attend to her benefactions and to put into them something of her large-hearted self; and that free giving of herself was her greatest contribution", said a writer in the *New York Post.* And yet the list of her philanthropic and public interests is an amazingly long one! "Every service she considered a privilege and thanked the person who called it forth", wrote another. "There was a rare discrimination as to the people or the causes that she helped. A well established cause, a popular appeal, where names of donors were printed, was not the place where she felt herself—for her gifts were a part of herself—most needed. But what she originated she held herself responsible for until others had caught her vision and shared her responsibility. What she did was permanent." "Her fifty-nine years of life showed how a woman can consecrate abundant gifts and use varied opportunities in the service of her Savior and her fellows. Those who are not born to such an inheritance as hers may well seek to learn the spirit of her life and to exemplify it in their own sphere of service."

Good Deeds that Every Class Can Do. Of course you know about the Department for Utilizing Surplus Material of the World's Sunday School Association. Does the work of sending to foreign mission fields through this Department the things which the missionaries are calling for, seem of less consequence than making coats and garments for the poor at home? Listen to what a deaconess in the Philippines has written to Dr. Price: "The little children are so interested in looking at the picture cards and so eager to know the story. The parents ask for them, too. Don't think that it is such a little thing to send the cards. First think how these small cards will cheer the hearts of many children who are being neglected, and help them to live good lives. Please send us more of the picture cards, picture rolls and post cards."

Another worker in the Philippines writes: "Our greatest need is probably Bible pictures, small or large, postcards or the ordinary cards and mottoes with Bible texts printed upon them. The Filipinos love gaudy, bright things, thus pictures and bright cards are most attractive to older people as well as to the children. Next to the need of pictures comes that of music and organs. The demand for song books suitable for children and young people and the cantatas for Christmas, Easter, Children's Day and Thanksgiving Day, increases. Because the children acquire English in the Public Schools, we do not need to do much translating and the people of all ages love the swing and spirit of our Gospel Songs. Then we need folding organs, which the workers can carry as they travel about by boat, cart or train. In street meetings, which are a prominent feature of the evangelistic work, the "baby organ" is the attraction and a never failing source of wonder to the people. Maps of any kind, large or small, are always welcome, yet we are able to get very few. The scrap books are very useful to us also."

A worker in Japan writes: "We will appreciate very much any reading matter containing easy and interesting stories for children, which may be translated into Japanese". "I have a week day Bible class for the married women of all ages, and they love to have pictures, too", writes a worker on Mulgrave Island.

What part are you having in this most helpful work? Write to Dr. Samuel D. Price, 216 Metropolitan Tower, New York City, for full information as to what is wanted and where to send the articles. Enclose a stamp for reply, and

give Dr. Price the exact name of your denomination, with "North" or "South" if there are the two branches.

Justice and Benevolence. Benevolence is only justice made perfect. We are accustomed to think of the poor being always with us, furnishing a field of benevolence, yet a moment's reflection will convince us that this virtue can not find its exercise in the field of injustice; the only field for its development is one which has been prepared for it by the sharp plowshare of a thoroughgoing justice. Injustice and benevolence can not dwell together, and when justice has done its perfect work there will be little left for the elder philanthropy to do, and charity will be apt to find its occupation gone. When the causes of distress have been removed, and distress itself will not have to be relieved, benevolence will find its hands free for other and better work. It is because we have really given our fellows less than justice, that we have seemed to give them more. *James Seth,* in *Study of Ethical Principles.*

Good and Better. Thou givest bread to the hungry, but better were it that none hungered, and thou hadst none to give to. Thou clothest the naked: O that all men were clothed and this need existed not! For if thou hast done a kindness to the wretched, perhaps thou wishest him to be subject to thee. He was in need. Thou didst bestow: thou seemest to thyself greater because thou didst bestow than he upon whom it was bestowed. Wish him to be thine equal. *St. Augustine,* in *Homily VIII* on the *Epistle of St. John.*

III Jesus Christ Healeth Thee

Whom to Thank. At the feet of a medical missionary a grateful father and mother knelt to worship her as a god, for she had restored their child to health. Hastily the missionary cried out to them, "We are not gods. Worship the true God." "You must be a god", they said; "No one but a god could have saved our beloved child from death". "Suppose", said the missionary, that I wished to bestow a valuable gift upon you, and sent it by the hand of one of your coolies, whom would you thank, the coolie or myself?" "We should thank you, of course; the coolie is your servant." "And so I am God's coolie, by whose hand God has been pleased to send you this gift of healing; and it is to him you must bow and give thanks."

The Hand is God's Hand. In a story by Alexander Irvine a woman just bereaved of her son has sought consolation from Anna, who tells her to ask God to lay his hand on her tired head. "Wud he do it, Anna?" "Well, just ask 'un, and then wait and see!"

In faltering tones Eliza made her request and waited. As gently as falls an autumn leaf, Anna laid her hand on Eliza's head, held it there for a moment and removed it. "Oh, oh, oh, he's done it, Anna. He's done it. Glory be t' God, he's done it!"

"Th' han' was mine, Eliza, but it was God's, too. God takes a han' wherever he can find it and jist diz what he likes wi' it. Sometimes he takes a Bishop's and lays it on a child's head in a benediction, then he takes the han' of a dochter t' relieve the pain, the han' of a mother t' guide her child, an' sometimes he takes the han' of an auld craither like me t' give a bit comfort to a neighbor. But they're all han's touch't be his Spirit, and his Spirit is everywhere lukin' fur han's to use."

The Helper of the Helpers.

The ways of the world are full of haste and turmoil:
I will sing of the tribe of helpers who travel in peace.

He that turneth from the road to rescue another,
Turneth toward his goal:
He shall arrive in due time by the footpath of mercy,
God will be his Guide.

He that careth for the sick and wounded,
Watcheth not alone:
There are three in the darkness together,
And the third is the Lord.

Blessed is the way of the helpers:
The companions of the Christ. *Dr. Henry van Dyke.*

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

Dorcas was full of good works and alms-deeds which she did—not which she dreamed of doing. Perhaps we imagine that we are full of good works because we think about them and plan to do them; the question is, do we do them?

Like Dorcas, use for the good of others whatever talent you have. If through doing humble deeds in the Master's service you are fitted for larger service, rejoice when the opportunity comes, but if it never comes, rejoice in your minor ministries, and continue to do whatever your hands find to do.

What is your responsibility in regard to the suffering around you? Says Dr. Marcus Dods: "Your opportunities of helping in social matters will vary with the position you are called to fill; but given the opportunity, it will weigh heavily on your conscience in later years if you have done little or nothing by your own practical endeavors to lighten the burden of the poor, to introduce justice and mercy into the relations of employer and employed, to replace squalor, disease, and hopelessness by comfort, health, and enjoyment of life; in a word, to bring in the kingdom of God on earth."

Our Prayer. Lord Jesus, we pray that thou wilt bless those to-day that attempt to fulfill the duties which thou thyself didst fulfill upon earth, by going about doing good. May all who comfort the sorrowing be comforted themselves of God. May all that bear the torch of light be themselves enlightened. May all that lift up the lowly and encourage the despairing be themselves mightily blessed of God. (*Beecher.*)

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The prevention of poverty versus the relief of poverty. See "Credit vs. Charity", *Outlook*, March 17, 1915.
2. Investments in philanthropy.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. What three good things about Cornelius are recorded? 2. What centurions do we hear about in the Gospels? (Mt. 8.5-13; Lk. 7.2-10; 23.47.) 3. What centurion of the Gospels resembled in generosity this centurion of Cæsarea? (Lk. 7.1-10.) 4. What is the meaning of "a centurion of the band"? (*Guide*, p. 172.) 5. Describe Joppa as a Jewish city. (*Guide*, p. 176.) 6. Describe Cæsarea as a Roman city. (*Guide*, p. 176.) 7. Draw a map and locate Jerusalem, Lydda, Joppa and Cæsarea, and trace Peter's journeys. 8. What was law in regard to "clean and unclean" animal food as given in Lev. 11? 9. What is a trance? 10. What impetuous words of Peter to his Master are recalled by his words in verse 14? (Mt. 16.22.) 11. Describe the meeting between Peter and Cornelius. 12. What did Peter tell his hearers in his sermon? 13. Why did Peter let them be baptized? 14. What statements in verses 34 and 35 give the lesson of the whole incident? 15. On what occasion did Peter later refer to this occasion as a commission given him to preach the gospel to the Gentiles? (Acts 15.7-9.) 16. For what did the apostles at Jerusalem censure Peter, what did he reply, and what then did they acknowledge? (Acts 11.1-18.)

Questions to Think About. 1. Why is Simon always referred to as "Simon the Tanner"? (*Guide*, p. 174.) 2. What are some of the occupations carried on upon the housetops in the East? (*Guide*. p. 175.) 3. What lesson did Jesus teach when he went to the home of Zaccheus? 4. What was the lesson that Peter learned from the vision? 5. When a truth has been learned to what should it lead? 6. How was Peter given an opportunity of putting into practice the lesson of his vision? 7. What hour of the day was the ninth hour? 8. What is the meaning of "are gone up for a memorial before God"? (*Guide*, p. 173.) 9. Why was this done thrice, verse 16? 10. Why did Peter take six brethren with him, verse 24? (*Guide*, p. 174.) 11. Why did Cornelius fall at Peter's feet? 12. Why does Peter explain why he came? (*Guide*, p. 174.) 13. How was this a critical time in the history of the church? (*Guide*, p. 175.) 14. What nationalities have you heard spoken of with scorn? 15. Is there any excuse for such scorn? 16. Is it ever right to look with contempt upon another?

Note-Book Work. In your book upon the Expansion of the Early Church, write Chapter X, The Witnessing of Peter in the Cure of Æneas and the Restoration of Dorcas.

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PETER AND CORNELIUS

Golden Texts

There is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, and is rich unto all that call upon him. Romans 10.12

Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him. Acts 10.34, 35

LESSON Acts 10.1-48: verses 1-16 printed

MEMORIZE verses 13-15, 44, 45

1 Now *there was* **a certain man in Cæsarea, Cornelius by name, a centurion of the band called the Italian** *band,* **2 a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, who gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always. 3 He saw in a vision openly, as it were about the ninth hour of the day, an angel of God coming in unto him, and saying to him, Cornelius. 4 And he, fastening his eyes upon him, and being affrighted, said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are gone up for a memorial before God. 5 And now send men to Joppa, and fetch one Simon, who is surnamed Peter: 6 he lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side. 7 And when the angel that spake unto him was departed, he called two of his household-servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually; 8 and having rehearsed all things unto them, he sent them to Joppa.**

9 Now on the morrow, as they were on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray, about the sixth hour: 10 and he became hungry, and desired to eat: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance; 11 and he beholdeth the heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending, as it were a great sheet, let down by four corners upon the earth: 12 wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts and creeping things of the earth and birds of the heaven. 13 And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill and eat. 13 But Peter said, Not so, Lord, for I have never eaten anything that is common and unclean. 15 And a voice *came* **unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, make not thou common. 16 And this was done thrice: and straightway the vessel was received up into heaven.**

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

I. The Vision of Cornelius, 1-8.
II. The Vision of Peter, 9-16.
III. The Opportunity of Putting the Lesson of the Vision into Practice, 17-22.
IV. The Opportunity Accepted, 23-48.
  1. Meeting of Peter and Cornelius, 23-33.
  2. Peter's Sermon, 34-43.
  3. The Hearers Receive the Holy Spirit and Are Baptized, 44-48.

1. *A centurion of the band.* The *band* means a Roman *cohort.* The Roman army was divided into legions, each legion into ten cohorts, each cohort into three maniples, and each maniple into two centuries. A centurion was the officer in command of a century, which consisted strictly of a hundred men, but sometimes of only fifty.—*Called the Italian band.* Originally the members were recruited in Italy.

Note.—Our Lesson Committee assigned Acts 10.1-23 for today, and for next week the remainder of the story, Acts 10.24-48. Both lessons are given here, that next week we may study the alternate Easter lesson assigned by the Lesson Committee.

2. *A devout man, and one that feared God.* "This is the regular description in the Acts for the outer ring of God-fearing adherents to the Jewish faith. They were not true 'proselytes'; 'proselytes' were circumcised and bound to keep the whole law (Gal. 5.3) The 'God-fearing' only accepted the creed of the One True God, made varying compliances with Jewish customs, and were admitted to a place in the synagogue" (*Rackham*).—*Gave much alms to the people.* To the Jews.

3. *The ninth hour.* Three in the afternoon, one of the Jewish hours of prayer.—*An angel of God coming in unto him.* "Angels come to visit us, and we only know them when they are gone" (*George Eliot*). "God's angels wait for an open door. They find it when the soul becomes devout, the life charitable, and the spirit prayerful" (*Samuel King*).

4. *Are gone up.* As the smoke of sacrifices. His prayers have been heard and remembered; he is about to receive the proof of this in the coming of Peter and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Compare Jn. 9.31.—*For a memorial.* Are had in remembrance in the sight of God, verse 31.

6. *By the sea-side.* The Mediterranean. The clause *He shall teach thee what thou oughtest to do,* is omitted from the Revised Version; it is believed to have been inserted in King James' Version because of 11.14.

7. *He called.* Compare the centurion's words in Luke 7.8.

9. *The sixth hour.* Noon, the second of the three regular hours of prayer.

10. *Trance.* "A state in which the soul seems to have passed out of the body into another state of being, or to be wrapt in visions; an ecstasy" (*Webster*). "The vision was evidently in its form and in its direction the result of previous natural circumstances. The death of Stephen must have had its effect on the apostle's mind. That truth for which he died, the transient character of Judaism, must have suggested strange new thoughts, to be pondered on, and doubted. Besides this, the apostle was in a state of hunger. In ecstasy, or trance, or vision, things meet for food presented themselves to his mental eye. Evidently the *form* in which this took place was shaped by his physical cravings, the *direction* depended partly on his previous thoughts concerning the opening question of the church. But the eternal truth, the spiritual verity conveyed by the vision, was clearly of a higher source. Here are the limits of the natural and supernatural closely bordering on each other" (*F. W. Robertson*).

11. *He beholdeth the heaven opened.* "Is Peter's vision on the housetop—sudden, astonishing, bewildering—necessarily more divine than those daily compunctions and hints, and dissatisfactions, and hauntings of something wrong in his attitude toward men, with which Peter might have been visited every day for weeks past?" "To us the heavens are opened in the revelation of God's great purposes and in the coming to us of great spiritual opportunities."—*A certain vessel.* A receptacle which somewhat resembled a great sheet held up by the four corners. "Perhaps the sail of one of those large Western ships in the offing," suggests Dr. George Adam Smith.

14. *Not so, Lord.* Compare Peter's impetuous words in Mt. 16.22 and Jn. 13.8. "When Peter said 'never' he was not far off from the penitent form. When he said, 'Thou shalt never wash my feet' he was next door to saying 'Not my feet only, but also my hands and my head'."—*Common and unclean.* See the Law in Lev. 11.

15. *What God hath cleansed.* By the very offering of "all manner" of beasts and birds, all were declared clean, and symbolically the offering meant that "God is no respecter of persons", verse 34. Apart from the symbolical meaning of the vision, it was important for the church leaders to recognize the fact that the distinction of meats held by the Jews in the past must now be given up, in order that Jews and Gentiles might eat together, associating on terms of equality. Peter had been hungry, but now he learned that there were Gentiles who were hungry for the Bread of Life.

16. *And this was done thrice.* To make the lesson impressive.

17-23. While Peter was pondering in his mind the full meaning of the vision, the arrival of the messengers sent by Cornelius gave him its application. They were asking at the gate for Peter when the Spirit bade him go down and go with them as they wished, for they had been divinely sent. Peter called them in and lodged them over night, putting at once into practice his understanding of the vision.

24. *On the morrow.* See verses 17-23.—*They.* Peter and six brethren whom he took with him. Peter felt that he was doing a venturesome thing and he wanted witnesses.—*Cornelius was waiting for them.* He had faith in the message of his vision, and faith also in Peter.—*And his near friends.* "We should not covet to eat our spiritual morsels alone" (*Matthew Henry*).

25. *Fell down at his feet and worshipped him.* "Cornelius was a Roman, and a soldier, and was not accustomed to make oriental salutations; if he went out to meet Peter, and made low obeisance, it was because he looked on Peter as a supernatural messenger" (*Lindsay*).

A Centurion

26. *I myself also am a man.* This seems to indicate that Peter realized Cornelius thought him a supernatural being.

28. *Ye yourselves know.* Peter feels so keenly that he, a Jew, is doing this unwonted thing in voluntarily coming to the home of a Roman, that he explains why he came.—*It is unlawful for a man that is a Jew to join himself or come unto one of another nation.* "The separative ceremonial law, partly Mosaic, but in larger part consisting of deductions from and additions to the Mosaic code, lay between the Romans and the Jews—a barrier which the conquerors could not pass. They tried in vain to implant in the Jews those cosmopolitan feelings they had instilled into other subject nations, and in the end they came to loathe the people whom ceremonial law fortified against all domination over the mind, and called them 'haters of the human race'" (*Lindsay.*)

29. *Without gainsaying.* Without objecting.

30. *A man in bright apparel.* Compare Lk. 24. 4; Mt. 28.3.

34-43. *Then Peter said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.* In these two statements lie the lesson of the vision and the mission: God does not judge persons by external conditions; the race or nationality of an individual does not affect the Divine Judgment; fear of God and right-living in any one secure his approval. Then to those Gentiles Peter preached Jesus the Christ, and ended by saying that whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.

44. *While Peter yet spake.* His sermon was interrupted by the manifestation of the Holy Spirit's presence.

45. *They of the circumcision.* The Jews, Peter and the six who accompanied him.

46. *Speak with tongues.* Recall the Day of Pentecost: see p. 60.

48. *He commanded them to be baptized.* The apostles themselves rarely baptized the converts: see 1 Cor. 1.14.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

6. *One Simon a tanner.* There exist but few family names in the East; in order to distinguish from each other persons bearing the same appellation, various devices are employed, no one rule being always adhered to. A man's name is often coupled with his business or profession. Ekmekji Ahmed, for instance, is Ahmed the Baker. This was common in New Testament times. In Syria a married man is generally distinguished from another bearing the same name by adding that of his son, as Yoosooph Aboo Anton, Joseph the father of Anthony. *Van Lennep,* in *Travels in Asia Minor.*

6. *Whose house is by the sea-side.* In Japan the lowest class is that of the

eta, those engaged in the business of tanning hides, butchering animals, and executing criminals. In the past they have been regarded as outcasts, compelled to live by themselves, and to sound an alarm whenever obliged to enter the villages of other classes so that the people there might avoid contact with them. The feeling against them still persists in some localities.

9. *Peter went up upon the housetop to pray, about the sixth hour.* The roof of the house was flat, or slightly raised in the center to allow the rain to run off. "When thou buildest a new house, then thou shalt make a battlement for thy roof, that thou bring not blood upon thy house, if any man fall from thence", was the law given by Moses, Dt. 22.8. This battlement, or balustrade, was often three to four feet high and concealed a person sitting or kneeling on the housetop. There was usually an outside stairway from the street.

Many were the activities carried on upon the housetop; there corn was dried, linen was hung up, exercise was taken, booths were erected during the Feast of Tabernacles, and there in hot weather sleep was sought. It was especially the place for prayer and meditation, at evening and in the morning and at noontide.

13. *Kill and eat.* Their flesh-meat, which is never hung for days, like ours, is put in the great iron cooking-pot whilst the carcass is still warm, as indicated in this command. *James Neil,* in *Pictured Palestine.*

14. *I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean.* Some of the animals seen in the vision were regarded by Jews as unclean, unfit for eating, and others as clean, fit for eating, but the clean by contact with the unclean had become themselves unclean, according to the Jewish belief. Levitical law prescribed what animals could be slaughtered for food, and prescribed also the method of slaughter. How strong this ingrained Jewish prejudice against eating food Levitically unclean is, is shown by the admission of a prominent rabbi of to-day, who has been an active Christian for forty years, that he has never brought himself to touch such food, although he knew he had no reason for not eating it.

17. *The men stood before the gate and called.* They called to the porter, whose duty it was to tend the gate or door that led from the street through the arched entrance into the interior courtyard. The oriental house is usually directly on the street, and built around a courtyard. Had they entered instead of standing without and calling, they would have given great offense, for they were Gentiles. See verse 28.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. How was Philip brought to the Ethiopian, and how was the Ethiopian prepared for his coming? How was Ananias brought to Saul, and how was Saul prepared for his coming? Where were the followers of Jesus bidden to carry the gospel? Into what regions has it been carried up to this time? Who was the first convert outside of Judaism to be baptized? What word of the Lord came to Jonah (a lesson of last year), and how did he heed it? Where was Jonah then? Where did Peter live while at Joppa? What did his going to such a home indicate? In our lesson from Philippians how were we told in lowliness of mind to think of ourselves and others?

A Great Lesson. The gospel had been taught to the hated Samaritans, but they had Jewish blood in their veins and kept the commands of Moses. Philip had taught and baptized the Ethiopian, but Philip was not one of the apostles and his was only a special case. The church at Jerusalem was still essentially Jewish; a new era was dawning, however, and a series of wonderful events changed the narrow Jewish-Christian religion into the universal Christian religion.

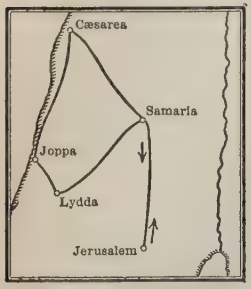
Shall a Gentile be baptized? Shall a Gentile be admitted to all the privileges of the Jews? Shall the Roman world have the gospel preached to it? Shall the gospel go to the uttermost parts of the earth? These were critical questions which Peter and the other apostles had to settle. Probably Peter was revolving them in his mind as he meditated on the housetop.

How the Church at Jerusalem Learned the Lesson. When Peter returned to Jerusalem the other apostles upbraided him for entering into the home of Gentiles and eating with them. Peter justified his conduct by telling them

of the two visions and of the coming of the Holy Spirit. "Who was I that I could withstand God?" he questioned. When they heard Peter's words they glorified God and said, "Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life".

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

For the location of Joppa, see the last lesson. Joppa was, next to Jerusalem, the most Jewish town in all Judea, the least controlled by Greek colonists. Pompey had decreed that it should be a free town, Cæsar had declared that it "should belong to the Jews, as it formerly did", and Augustus had given it to Herod the Great's Kingdom. "Joppa was therefore Jewish as no other town on the coast or Maritime Plain", says Dr. George Adam Smith. "Though Joppa was tributary to Herod, he never resided there, or tried to rebuild it, or plant heathen features upon it. Alone of the chief cities of the region it had no Greek or Latin name attached to it. In close commerce with Jerusalem, it was infected with the fanatic patriotism of the latter. To Jewish Joppa Jewish Peter came; and we can understand that, as he moved about its narrow lanes, leading to the sea, where his scrupulous countrymen were jostled by foreign sailors and foreign wares, he grew more concerned than ever about the ceremonial law."



PETER'S JOURNEYS

Cæsarea must not be confused with Cæsarea Philippi, near which Jesus had gone with his disciples when Peter made his great confession that Jesus is the Christ. This Cæsarea was built by Herod the Great on the site of a small village upon the Mediterranean shore at the northern extremity of the Plain of Sharon, thirty miles north of Joppa. He constructed a fine artificial harbor by means of breakwaters (remains of which are still to be seen), and named the city Cæsarea Augusta in honor of the Emperor Augustus Cæsar. It was made the capital of the Roman province of Judea, and here the governor, or procurator, as he was called, resided and the Roman troops had their headquarters. A military road connected it with Jerusalem, seventy miles away.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee. Some one has said that "Peter would have liked two tabernacles on the roof; instead he had three native Christians to conduct him to the nearest mission outpost". While he was meditating about abstract truth, the concrete facts of life were presented to him: through these messengers he was given an immediate opportunity of putting into practice the lesson learned. He was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision. Every vision is given that it may be put into practice.

Recall the experience of Jesus. Rapt Seer and Divine Worker both was he. A See-er of visions, meditating oft upon eternal truths, he always turned immediately from them to the everyday problems of individuals, and always and everywhere went about doing the good of which each concrete case had need; whether it was to go from the hillside, whither he had gone apart to commune with God, to save his half-shipwrecked disciples on the Lake; or from the Mount of Transfiguration, where he was glorified with the light of God, to cure the wretched lunatic in the valley below.

So we must all grasp the great truth that religion is not for self alone—if ours is, we shall soon be without religion. The seeing of an abstract truth is only half: if the complementary half be not joined with it, it becomes even less than half. The true sequence is—ideal, impulse, action. Action is essential to render the lofty ideals an integral part of character. We grow wiser by receiving higher ideals, but unless we try to execute them we do not grow better. It is natural for a little child to attempt at once to put his plans in execution, his good impulses into action. The aim of all child-training should be to encourage this natural tendency. To hold forth lofty visions of the good and

true to children of larger growth, is easy; to arouse their good impulses is comparatively easy; to lead those impulses to their fruition in action requires much thought and skill on the leader's part. Be on the lookout, point out opportunities for putting visions into practice, and teach your pupils to recognize them when they come.

Another thought. The vision was repeated over and over again. Some pupils can stand a great deal of repetition, especially pupils like Simon Peter.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. The Romans called the Jews "Basket-carriers", because a Jew when traveling had a basket, or wallet, slung from his shoulders, in which he carried his food. There were some kinds of meat which he would never touch, because they were forbidden by law, and so he took his food with him when he went on a journey lest he should by chance eat the food that was forbidden, or unclean as he called it. Nor would he eat with a Gentile, for that, too, would make him "unclean". "I will buy with you, sell with you, talk with you, walk with you, and so following; but I will not eat with you, drink with you, nor pray with you", says Shylock to Bassanio, in one of Shakespeare's plays, and this has always been the spirit of strict Jews. A strict Jew in our own time and country will not use soap in washing dishes, because the fat of pigs has been used in making it, and a dish which has been washed by a Gentile must be rewashed by a Jew before it can be used. The apostles were all strict Jews, you know, and they thought it wrong to eat certain kinds of meat or to eat with Gentiles. In a wonderful way they learned that this belief of theirs was wrong.

For Older Pupils. Begin with the Geographical Background.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Exclusiveness

Peter's Change. Were it not for this vision, Peter would have stopped growing. He was intense but narrow, energetic but circumscribed, devout but parochial. He liked preaching, and addressed his congregations as men and brethren, but the emphasis was on the *brethren* and not on the *men*. He hungered to see lives changed, but he was very particular in his congregation. His taste in souls was fastidious. He wanted to see his Lord and Savior crowned, but his Court was to be in Jerusalem. He was a Little Hebrew and not a Christian Imperialist. Here is a strong man, obstinate, narrow and combative—as all narrow people are—circumscribed in his views, inhospitable in his attitude, unprepared to soil the kingdom of God with any unclean Gentile. He retires to pray, and something happens. He sees a vision which antagonizes his views, which shatters his poor, flimsy distinctions, which breaks down the walls of his prejudices and sends him away to Cæsarea to baptize an Italian convert whom a few hours before he would have blackballed as an uncircumcised heathen.

In the text we see him in the process of transformation, breaking out into a larger horizon and a wider sympathy. There are days in the spring when we can almost see the buds burst and the green things grow. That was a gracious day in Joppa, and we can see this late plant grow and expand. He climbed up the roof a narrow Jew, he came down a broad and hospitable soul; he went up a provincial and came down a missionary. *Condensed* from a *Sermon* by *Thomas Phillips.*

"I Never Have." When, by a marvelous vision of the plan of redemption that was to include the whole world, Peter was shown his task, he offered as an excuse for deep-seated racial prejudice that he never had done such a thing before. That time-worn, battered excuse has been presented from that hour to this.

"I never have been interested in foreign missions." Thousands are the victims of this prejudice, who yet strangely enough call themselves the disciples of Christ.

"I never have taken any part in the prayer-meeting." So she thought the social weekly gathering dull, was easily persuaded not to attend it, and had an unerring gift of criticism for those who did.

The members of the "Never Have" Club are many. Peter thought better of it, and said, wisely, "What was I that I could withstand God?" Is it not precisely what we need to see, that, instead of fancying we have said the last word with "I never have", we are being disobedient to a world vision, when, bidden to any service needful to humanity, we offer so flimsy an excuse?

The effective work of the world might easily be doubled if the "Never Haves" would only change their motto to "I always do". *Condensed* from *Zion's Herald.*

A Modern Hindu. Sir Pertab Singh is an Indian prince now fighting with the allies. When a friend died of cholera the prince, despite protests, himself carried the body out to the gun carriage. "A gasp went up at the sight", writes Mr. Coningsby Dawson in a despatch; "every one of his subjects knew what he had done. The next morning five hundred Brahmin priests were waiting in his courtyard. He came out to face them. He knew what they had come for—to make him the lowest thing in India, a man without caste. They told him their errand. Sir Pertab Singh laughed. 'I belong,' he said, 'to a higher caste than any of you have ever dreamed of, and you can't take it from me; you're welcome to all the rest. I belong to the caste of a soldier.' With that, he walked back into his palace, and the Brahmin priests went away ashamed and puzzled."

God is no Respecter of Persons. The House of Hapsburg is the most ancient of the reigning houses of Europe, and a very ancient burial custom is still observed on the death of an Austrian Emperor. The body is taken from the royal palace to the crypt of the ancient monastery of the Capuchins near Vienna. The royal cortege arrives, but no one appears to receive it. The master of ceremonies then knocks on the closed door with his staff and demands admission.

"Who is there?" asks the voice of the guardian monk from within.

"His Majesty, the most high Emperor of Austria, King of Hungary, Duke of Styria", and so forth, replies the master of ceremonies, as he recites the long list of the dead man's titles.

"I know no such man", curtly replies the guardian from behind the closed door.

The master of ceremonies knocks a second time. Again the monk asks, "Who is there?" Again the master of ceremonies repeats the list of the royal titles, and again the voice of the guardian replies, "I know no such man".

A third time the master of ceremonies knocks with his staff.

"Who is there?" repeats the voice.

"Our brother, Francis Joseph" (or whatever the dead monarch's name may be), replies the master of ceremonies.

At this humble confession of the simple humanity of the dead emperor the bolts fly back. "Enter, brother!" cries the voice of the guardian monk, and the body is admitted. There follows later an imposing public burial.

II Learning New Lessons

It was God who Bade Peter Break away from Past Traditions. At first he refused. He loved the old and was accustomed to it. This breaking away from old landmarks did not please him. And the vision came three times before he gave in. Jesus had spoken of the new wine which the old bottles would not be able to hold. And here it is already. And, just as Jesus had foreseen, Peter did not straightway desire the new, for he said, The old is better. Yet Peter lived to thank God that he had stopped him on the old road, and compelled him, reluctant as he was, to take a new and untried path.

And in all Scripture, I do not know a passage fuller of comfort for us, as we look out, often with sinking hearts, upon the changes in doctrine and practice that are going on around us. I cannot think why the Church has not caught firm hold of this message, and spoken it with a trumpet in the ears of the disheartened. For—I say again—here we have God himself engineering what his perplexed servant regards as nothing short of a revolution! We have only to look back a little way in history to see how we have shifted ground. The God of the eleventh century, Anselm's God, is not our God today. Calvin's God, Jonathan Edward's God, is not our God today. And the Author of the Change, the Giver of the Vision, is the Lord himself. That's the point. That's the comfort.

Don't miss it, one of you. The Author of the change is the Lord himself. Well, then, have we reached finality, think you? Is our horizon the broadest that ever shall be? Are our doctrines full and perfect? Are all our labels sacred, never to be taken off?

Once, we are told, Spain stamped upon her coins the Pillars of Hercules, and took as her motto, *Ne Plus Ultra*—No more beyond. But when the bold spirit of Columbus passed beyond these pillars, and discovered the New World, Spain omitted the *Ne,* and left *Plus Ultra*—more beyond. And that's the only motto which is worthy of those who believe that it is God himself who is moving the world and men up the long slope of history and progress. No matter how far we have come, no matter how much we have learned of God or of the Spirit of Jesus, the word is still *Plus Ultra.* There's more beyond! *Condensed* from a *Sermon* by *Archibald Alexander.*

John Wesley's Lesson. The Spirit never allows his work to get into ruts or be bound by ecclesiasticisms. Few things are more worthy of study than the struggle that hitherto bigoted High Churchman, John Wesley, had with himself in the beginning of 1739. Whitefield first of all began to preach in the open air in the beginning of that year. "I thought," he said, "I might be doing the service of my Creator who had a mountain for his pulpit and the heavens for a sounding board". Wesley went to Bristol to hear his friend preach and looked on. not knowing what to make of it. "All my life till very lately," he says, "I have been so tenacious of every point relating to decency and order that I should have thought the saving of souls almost a sin if it had not been done in a church." But the churches were closed against him—even whole dioceses were shut—and the multitude was waiting to be fed. To a praying man such a debate could have only one end. "Suffer me now to tell you my principles in this matter. I look upon all the world as my parish, thus far, I mean, that in whatever part of it I am I judge it meet, right, and my bounden duty to declare unto all that are willing to hear the glad tidings of salvation." If puzzled hearts will but keep on praying the vague duty will all at once stand out clear. *Dr. R. Bruce Taylor,* in *Sunday School Chronicle.*

Let Us Hold a Broad Theology. Illiberality of mind sometimes reveals itself in an orthodoxy that prevents a man from looking calmly and boldly at the religious questions which the circumstances of the age may bring into discussion; sometimes it reveals itself in a harsh, exclusive denominationalism; sometimes in an ascetic strictness of life which causes a man to think and speak intolerantly about all enjoyments and recreations; sometimes it shows itself in a fear of worldly conformity, that exaggerates the mint, the anise, and the cummin of ecclesiastical law and obedience. Let us beware of a voluntary repulsive narrowness, that is really of a suspicious, conceited, uncharitable spirit. Let us hold a broad theology—a theology as wide as judgment, mercy, and truth; let us belong to a broad Church, a Church so wide that it will give space to all the genuine powers and passions of our large, manifold humanity. Let not our spirit be mistrustful, critical, censorious, prohibitive, but hopeful, sympathetic, tolerant, knowing that in God the world is ours, our life ours, in the fulness thereof. Jesus Christ stood at the utmost remove from the prudish, pedantic, carping, pettifogging Pharisee; he, above all men, had broad sympathies, largeness of mind, magnanimity; he was the ideal Catholic. Let it be thus with us. Let us live with holy liberty and confidence and charity. Let us be broad, yet pure; broad, yet true; broad, yet intense and enthusiastic in the service of our Lord. *Dr. W. L. Watkinson,* in *Noon Day Addresses.*

III Putting the Lesson of the Vision into Practice

Make Your Life the Interpretation of your Visions. Peter was sitting there, pondering this vision, "doubting in himself what the vision which he had seen should mean". A new idea had come to him. He saw it very vaguely; and its developments, what it would lead to if he followed it out, he could not see at all. It was all abstract and impalpable. It just bewildered and eluded him. But as he sat there, steps were heard below, and to his mind the Spirit spoke, saying, "Three men are asking for thee". They were the servants of Cornelius, the Gentile, coming to ask him to visit their master. Their visit gave him immediately the chance to put in action the idea which had possessed him.

Our verse shows him, then, standing between the vision and its application. On the one side of him was the mysterious sheet full of the multitude of beasts; on the other side were the three men who needed just the principle which the sheet-full of beasts involved. It was a critical moment. The question was whether the vision could pass through Peter to the three men and Cornelius. When on the morrow he "went away with them", the question was decided, and the idea and its appropriate duty had joined hands.

It is illustrated, this central and critical position in which a man may stand, by the way in which the artist stands between the whole world of beautiful ideas and the hard world of matter, in which these ideas at last find their expression through him. The artist dreams his dream, and as he thinks upon the vision, the Spirit says, "Behold, the marble seeks thee"; and instantly the chisel is in his hand and the work of carving has begun. Ideas would hover like a great, vague cloud over a world all hard and gross and meaningless, if it were not for man who brings the fire down and makes the whole of nature significant and vocal. If civilization has changed the face of nature, and out of rocks and trees built monuments and cities, the whole long history is but the record of the meeting within the transmitting intelligence of man of the abstract idea with the adaptable material.

Suppose that God has let you see his goodness. A strong, unalterable persuasion that God is merciful and kind has been poured onto your life, into your mind. That fact itself, once known, absorbs your contemplation. If you and God were all the universe, the knowledge of his goodness would be everything to you. You would sit lonely in the empty world and fill your soul with gazing on the brightness of that truth. So you do sit today, as if you and God were indeed alone, and no one in the universe except you two. And then, as you sit so, there comes some sort of appeal from fellow-men. The three men are down at the door while you are dreaming on the housetop. Your child comes to you with some childish joy and wants its explanation; some puzzled neighbor cries across to you, from his life to yours, and wants to know if you have any clue to all this snarl of living. Somehow the cry awakens you, and you go down and put your truth into your brother's hands. At first it seems almost a profanation. The truth is so sacred and seems so thoroughly your own. But as you give it to your brother, new lights come out in it. For God to be good means something more when the goodness turns to new forms of blessing in the new need of this new life. O you who think you know that God is merciful because of the mercy which he has showed to you, be sure there is a richness in your truth which you have not reached yet, which you will never reach until you let him make your life the interpreter of his goodness to some other soul!

Or again, perhaps the truth which you have learned, the vision which you have seen, is the sinfulness of sin—what a terrible thing it is for any child of God to disobey his Father. Overwhelmed with that knowledge, you sit and brood upon your sad estate. I think that all religious history bears witness that that conviction, if it remains purely a personal truth of our own life, certainly grows tyrannical and morbid and brings despair. As soon as it becomes a stimulus, inspiring us to go and help our brethren escape out of their sin, it becomes salutary and blessed. If I knew any soul to-day, haggard and weary with its consciousness of sin and danger, I think that what I would try to do to help it would be this—make it see in its own sinfulness the revelation of the sinfulness of all the world; then let it forget its own sinfulness and keep only the impulse that must come out of its sight of how horrible the world's sin is; then let it go, full of that impulse, and try to save the world. So it must find its own salvation.

So of the truth of immortality. Not as a personal privilege of mine, but as a token of the greatness and worth of the human soul, making every service which I can render to it more imperious and delightful—so do I come to understand with the fullest faith, the fact that man never dies.

So of such a truth as the Trinity. Not as a puzzle or a satisfaction of the intellect, but as an expression of the manifold helpfulness with which the Divine nature offers itself to the human, so it will be to me the richest and the holiest creed.

It is a terrible thing to have seen the vision, and to be so wrapped up in its contemplation as not to hear the knock of needy hands upon our doors. It is

a terrible thing to hear the knock and have no vision to declare to the poor knocker. But there is no greater happiness in all the world than for a man to love Christ for the mercy Christ has shown his soul, and then to open his whole heart outward and help to save his brethren's souls with the same salvation in which he rejoices for himself. May none of us go through life so poor as never to have known that happiness. *Condensed* from *Visions and Tasks,* by *Phillips Brooks.*

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

Calvin lived within sight of Mount Blanc, but there is not a line in his writings which indicates that he ever saw it. You live within sight of exalted ideals, the visions of nobleness and duty that come to you: does your life indicate the fact? Whatever visions you have of truth, the ones you put into practice are the ones which count.

Peter learned that there is no such thing as a "common man". Have you learned it? Do you ever scorn another because he belongs to a different race from your own? There is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord is Lord of all.

The Father can come to men like Cornelius before they know Christ, and prepare their hearts for the message he is going to send them through men and women filled with the Spirit, whom it is our privilege to help send to them.

Our Prayer. O thou who art Lord of all, teach us to be, like thee, no respector of persons. Deliver us from that vulgarity which gathers up its skirt lest it should touch "common people", give us grace to put away all prejudice against others, even all indifference to others, and help us to see each one in the light of the Christ who died for him. In thy teachings help us to recognize some new task to be undertaken for thee in behalf of our brothers the world over.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The open mind. See the Second Topic, and Chapter VII of "Studies in the Making of Character", by Henry W. Clark.

2. Racial and religious prejudice. See "Japan and the War", *Outlook,* Dec. 23, 1914; "The True Man and Church Caste", *Outlook,* Sept. 14, 1907.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. Why did Paul write the fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians? (*Guide,* p. 184.) 2. Which one of the appearances of the Risen Lord recorded here is not mentioned in the Gospels? (*Guide,* p. 183.) 3. What two recorded in the Gospels are not here mentioned? (*Guide,* p. 183.) 4. Read the accounts of the appearances of the Risen Lord given in the Gospels. (Mt. 28.1-20; Mk. 16.1-20; Lk. 23.56-24.53; Jn. 20.1-21, 25.) 5. Tell how the apostle Thomas was convinced of the fact of the resurrection. (Jn. 20.24-29.) 6. With verse 9 compare Paul's words in 1 Tim. 1.12-16. 7. What was one of the peculiar offices of an apostle as given in Lk. 24.46-48? 8. Where in the Bible will you find Paul's words: "O grave, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?" 9. What was the prayer of Paul in Phil. 3.10?

Questions to Think About. 1. What does Paul mean by "that which also I received"? (*Guide,* p. 182.) 2. Who was Cephas, verse 5? 3. What is the meaning of "some are fallen asleep", verse 6? 4. What is the meaning of verse 8? (*Guide,* p. 183.) 5. What is the meaning of verse 11? 6. What does Paul mean by "By the grace of God I am what I am"? 7. Why do we call this Easter Day? 8. Why do you believe that Jesus arose from the dead? 9. What did Longfellow mean when he wrote "There is no death; what seems so is transition"? 10. What does Easter mean to you?

Questions on the First Epistle to the Corinthians. 1. When was Paul at Corinth, and what, in brief, did he do there? 2. Why did he afterwards write to the Corinthians? 3. What is the character of the letter? 4. What are the two great chapters, and what is the theme of each? (For answers to these questions, see pp. 33-36 of our Introduction.)

Memory and Note-Book Work. Memorize 1 Cor. 15.1-11, and Ralph Connor's stanza, p. 188. Write Chapter XI, Peter Learns a Great Lesson.

LESSON IV—APRIL 23

THE RISEN LORD—(EASTER LESSON)

Golden Text

Now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the first-fruits of them that are asleep. 1 Corinthians 15.20

LESSON 1 Corinthians 15.1-28: verses 1-11 printed

MEMORIZE verses 3, 4

1 Now I make known unto you, brethren, the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye received, wherein also ye stand, 2 by which also ye are saved, if ye hold fast the word which I preached unto you, except ye believed in vain. 3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received: that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; 4 and that he was buried; and that he hath been raised on the third day according to the scriptures; 5 and that he appeared to Cephas; then to the twelve; 6 then he appeared to above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain until now, but some are fallen asleep; 7 then he appeared to James; then to all the apostles; 8 and last of all, as to the *child* untimely born, he appeared to me also. 9 For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. 10 But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not found vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. 11 Whether then *it be* I or they, so we preach, and so ye believed.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

I. The Resurrection of Christ the most Vital of All the Doctrines of the Christian Faith, 1-4.
II. The Historical Evidence for Christ's Resurrection, 5-11.
  1. Appearances during the Forty Days, 5-7.
  2. Appearance to Paul, 8.
  3. Result in Paul's Case, 9-10.
III. A Truth Taught by All Teachers, 11.

1. *The gospel.* Or, *the good tidings,* RVm.—*Which I preached unto you.* While at Corinth, Acts 18.—*Wherein also ye stand.* Let us hold fast the profession of our faith, Heb. 10.23; He only that endureth to the end shall be saved, Mt. 10.22.

2. *Ye are saved.* That is, ye are in the way of Salvation.—*Except ye believed in vain.* Or, *without cause,* RVm.

3. *I delivered unto you.* I told you.—*First of all.* As most important of all the good tidings which he declared unto them.—*That which also I received.* Facts which he learned from the older disciples, probably when he talked with Peter and James on his first visit to Jerusalem after his conversion, Acts 9.27, 28; Gal. 1.18, 19.—*Died for our sins.* Died to atone for our sins.—*According to the scriptures.* In fulfilment of the scriptures. Compare Isa. 53; Lk. 24. 44-46.

4. *He was buried.*

O day of awful story—Jesus is dead!
Sad end to hope and glory—Jesus is dead!
A weary night of weeping—Jesus is dead!
A night that knows no sleeping—Jesus is dead!
A day in sorrow dawning—Jesus is dead!
A sad and gloomy morning—Jesus is dead!

(*Whittle.*)

He hath been raised

Behold, the stone is rolled away!
And shining ones have come to say,
"He is not here, but is risen!"
The night of death is past and gone,
Arise and greet the glorious morn!
"He is not here, but is risen!" (*Whittle.*)

On the third day. The Jews counted a part of a day as an entire day. Jesus was crucified on the afternoon of Friday, and arose on the morning of Sunday, thus lying in the tomb three days according to their way of reckoning.

5. *Cephas.* Another name for Peter, Lk. 24.34.—*Then to the Twelve.* There were only ten, for Judas was dead and Thomas was not present, but Paul keeps the symbolical number.

6. *Above five hundred brethren at once.* Probably on the mountain in Galilee, Mt. 28.16, 17.—*Of whom the greater part remain until now.* They are still living, and you can have their direct testimony if you wish, is Paul's meaning. —*Some are fallen asleep.* Some had died in the course of the twenty-five years that had intervened between the great event and the present.

7. *James.* The brother of Jesus, Acts 15.13; Gal. 1.19. This appearance is not mentioned in the Gospels.—*Then to all the apostles.* As recorded in our first lesson of the year. In this list of the appearances of the Risen Lord those to Mary Magdalene and the two disciples at Emmaus (Luke 24) are omitted. This is the earliest written account, earlier than those of the Gospels.

8. *He appeared to me also.* To Paul, the writer of this letter, as recorded in our first lesson of this Quarter.—*As to the child untimely born.* He was out of time for the great privilege of holding converse with the Risen Lord, such as the other apostles had. "Of these evidences the greatest in Paul's consciousness was the fact that Christ had appeared to him on that never-to-be-forgotten day as he travelled along the Damascus road. The effects of that meeting in his own life made it for ever impossible that he should have any doubt as to the Lord being alive. For he has made him anew; and every instinct and activity of his new life is a testimony to the fact of the resurrection. Thus his own experience becomes his Evangel, as indeed it always does with every man who comes to know Christ for himself. For Christ is his own best evidence, and the one who knows him cannot but seek to persuade men of that of which he is himself a living proof. The best answer any one of us can make when questioned for proof of the resurrection of the Lord is the humble, but irrefutable one: 'Christ liveth in me'" (*J. Stuart Holden*).

9. *I am the least of the apostles.* Compare 1 Tim. 1.12-16.

10. *By the grace of God.* "Grace is the love of God seen in its contact with human sin and need" (*Holden*).—*I am what I am.* That is, one of the apostles. —*Was not found vain.* Has been proved justified.—*But I labored more abundantly than they all.* Paul adds this because the Corinthians had heard his apostleship denied, 1 Cor. 1.12; 2 Cor. 11.5; 12.11.

11. *Or they.* Or the other apostles.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

4. *He was buried, and he hath been raised on the third day.* The Rev. Abraham Mitrie Rihbany has written for the *Atlantic Monthly* a series of articles about his early life as a lad in Palestine. Here is his interesting account of the way the Easter festival is celebrated in the Greek church:

"Our priest often said that the picture of the Virgin looked very sad on Good Friday and smiled on Easter. On Good Friday I flew over the hills to gather wild flowers with which the cross was covered in a little coffin, in commemoration of the burial of Jesus. Soon after midnight, on Saturday, the church-bell pealed the glorious message of the Resurrection. I woke with the words, 'Christ is risen!' on my lips. 'Indeed he is risen!' was the answer. I kissed my parents' hands, and we all proceeded to the church to enjoy the glorious Easter ritual.

"The supreme moment for me during the Easter mass came when Satan was vanquished by Christ. The entire congregation, following the priest, marched

three times around the church, each carrying a lighted taper. Then all marched out of the church, only one man, who represented Satan, remaining inside. He closed the church door and stood close behind it, to prevent the risen Lord from entering into heaven.

"The priest who represented Christ approached the door with the multitude behind him and in a most solemn voice chanted the words of the psalmist: 'Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in!' The man inside said in a sneering tone, 'Who is this King of Glory?' 'The Lord of Hosts,' said the priest, 'he is the King of Glory!' Thrice was the chant repeated; then the hindering Satan, vanquished, barked like a dog, and the priest forced the door open and marched in with the multitude, chanting, 'Let God arise and let his enemies be scattered!'"

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. To whom did Jesus show himself for the last time after his resurrection? What did he say to his followers? What then took place? How has Peter borne witness to the fact of the resurrection? When did Jesus appear to Paul? What did Paul say about himself in the Golden Text for that lesson? How had he persecuted the church of God?

The First Epistle to the Corinthians. See pp. 33-36 of our Introduction.

Why Paul Wrote the Fifteenth Chapter. The Church at Corinth was founded by Paul (as we learn in a later lesson), and in the fifteenth chapter of his letter to the Corinthians he writes about the fact and the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead. Many of the Corinthians, who did not disbelieve in the resurrection of Christ,—a better way of putting the case, apparently, than to say they believed in it,—still had no belief nor hope of their own life after death. To convince them of their own future as well as strengthen them in their faith in Christ's resurrection, Paul wrote this wonderful chapter. After recalling the historical evidences of Christ's resurrection (our lesson), Paul shows, (verses 12-19) that the denial of the resurrection of the dead logically leads to a denial of Christ's resurrection, thus overthrowing the whole Christian faith. In verses 20-28 he speaks of the consequences of Christ's resurrection, and concludes his chapter with the effect which the hope of resurrection has upon the Christian life.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

For Corinth, see p. 33.

We know that the tomb of Jesus was near the place of crucifixion and without the city gate (Heb. 13.12). Underneath the dome of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem the tomb is shown which has been the traditional location since the time of Constantine. By most modern scholars the accepted site is the hill above Jeremiah's Grotto. Here there is "the Garden Tomb" which is very like what Christ's tomb must have been.

Very early in the Christian centuries it came to be deemed a sacred privilege to visit "the place where the Lord lay". When the Arabian followers of Mohammed gained possession of the Holy Land, pilgrims were still allowed to come and go, but in the eleventh century the Turks became masters of Palestine and soon all Europe was aroused over the fact that pilgrimages were no longer allowed. Then it was that the famous Crusades began, "to rescue the tomb of Christ from the infidels".

Now at every Easter Jerusalem is crowded with pilgrims, some twenty thousand being the estimated number who come from many lands and speak various languages; Russians, Bulgarians, Roumanians and Greeks being in the majority.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

"There is a great mistake in teaching children that they have souls", is a striking remark of a recent writer. Why? "If you do", he says, "they think their souls to be something which is not themselves. For what a man has cannot be himself. Hence, when they are told their souls go to heaven, they

think of themselves as lying in the grave. They ought to be taught that they have bodies, and that their bodies die, but they themselves live on." Our lesson to-day affords an opportunity of teaching pupils, however young, the great truth that we live in our bodies here as our bodies live in our houses, and that when we leave our bodies at death, we ourselves continue to live. A little four-year-old was walking one day with her father through the village cemetery when she pointed to the graves and asked, "What are those for?" "They belong to the people who have gone to heaven", was the answer her father made. "To the angels?" she asked, wonderingly. "Yes." "Then", she remarked after a moment's thought, "these are where they have left their clothes".

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Begin with Mrs. Richard's story, below.

For Older Pupils. What part of the fifteenth Chapter of First Corinthians is usually read in all burial services? Why? Who wrote it? To whom did he write? What led him to write those words which have cheered the hearts of mourners throughout all these years? (Historical Background.)

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Now hath Christ been Raised from the Dead

Hallelujah! The trees were still bare, and the grass brown and sere in the northern city; but the sky was blue and cloudless, and the air warm and soft. On a bench under one of the leafless trees in the park sat an old man, gray-haired and poorly clad. His eyes were fixed on the ground, and he was thinking of many sorrowful things. Suddenly he heard a little, clear voice, saying, "Didn't they give you any flowers?"

He looked up and saw a wee girl standing before him, with her hands full of flowers. She had a round, rosy face and round, blue eyes, and a little round rosebud of a mouth; and she was looking at him very seriously indeed.

"Didn't they give you any flowers?" she repeated. "No, dear", said the old man, gently, "nobody gave me any flowers. Where did you get your pretty posies?"

"In church, of course," said the child. "The minister gives us all flowers. You shall have some of mine," and she took some sprays of lily of the valley and a red rose and laid them in the old man's withered hand. "Does that make you glad?" she asked anxiously. "The minister says everybody must be glad to-day."

"Why must everybody be glad, my little angel?" asked the old man, sadly, "Because Christ the Lord is risen," said the child. "Didn't you know? Don't you know that this is Easter Day?"

The old man smiled, and raised the flowers to his lips and kissed them. "I have been ill, my little angel," he said, "but you have made me almost well again, and I *will* be glad! Christ the Lord is risen indeed."

"Hallelujah!" cried the child, eagerly. "Hallelujah!" echoed the old man, reverently. "Hallelujah," sang the bluebird in the leafless tree. "Hallelujah!" said the whole wide world. *Laura E. Richards,* in *Five-Minute Stories.*

Christ's Resurrection the Best Authenticated Event in History. To propose difficulties about the resurrection is easy indeed. What a lot of difficulties we could have framed about this world before we came into it! Yet we find a thousand things are practicable and actual which in anticipation would have seemed incredible. The resurrection of our Lord settles the fact of ours, and for the explanation we can confidently wait.

Certain scientists are diligently seeking for facts to authenticate the belief that the dead reappear, so finding a scientific basis for the doctrine of immortality. But we who believe in Jesus are not deeply interested in these researches. One has come back from the grave, and shown himself alive by many infallible signs. Upon the Living One, who conquered death and the grave, we build, nor will we suffer shame.

Hall Caine tells us that Rossetti was not an atheist, but simply one with a suspended judgment; in face of death his attitude was one of waiting, he did not know. Now the great work of Jesus Christ touching the doctrine of im-

mortality was to convert it from a speculation into a certainty. The evidence for his resurrection, which carries with it the doctrine of our incorruptibility and immortality, is overwhelming; as one has said, it is the best authenticated fact in history. *Dr. W. L. Watkinson.*

The Power of Christ's Resurrection. "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection" was the prayer of Paul. He was a man who was not satisfied to know a truth unless he also knew its power; unless, that is, he felt its influence upon himself. For there are different sorts of knowledge. Something happens and I hear of it. This is the slightest sort of knowledge. The mind simply receives and registers the incident. But let me find that that something has a relation to me—that it must influence my action and change my life; let me feel this deeply, and then I know the power of the fact. It is not the mind alone, it is the whole man, who knows it. It is one thing to stand on the shore and see the great waves and say, "There is a storm", and it is a very different thing to be out in the midst of those waves, tossed every way by them, fighting for your life. On the shore you know of them; in their midst you know them, you know their power.

We celebrate on Easter Day the rising of our Savior from the tomb. And we go about with one another, heart saying to heart everywhere, "Christ is risen." And what makes that such a glad greeting is the assurance that is hidden in under it and is heard up through it; "We too shall rise". It is the assurance of our immortality bound up with Christ's, the certainty that because he rose we shall rise also, that makes the resurrection such a message of gladness to us all.

But is this all? Is this simple assurance of continued existence, that we are to rise from the dead and go on in some future state of existence—is this what Paul means by "the power of the resurrection"? It seems certainly evident enough that Paul meant more than this—that it was some great powerful change to be worked in and on him himself. On him—not merely on things about him. It was not simply that by Christ's death and resurrection the tyranny of the old law of decay had been broken, so that instead of living seventy years his life was to stretch out into eternity and never to end. It was evidently that the quality of the life itself was to be changed, that he was to be something new and different, and not that he was just to be the same old thing a little or a good deal longer, when he should know the power of the resurrection.

He puts it all in one verse to the Romans: "That like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life". There is the whole power of the "resurrection"—a new man for the new world. In every respect in which Easter opens a new prospect before man it must open also a new character in man. Until it has done that, man has not really "known its power". *Condensed* from *Sermons for the Church Year,* by *Phillips Brooks.*

Of Two Men—Which Are You? To-day is Easter—now let us see just what it means to two men.

The first man—one of those to whom church means little, way down in his heart he is probably religious, but he has gotten into careless habits. His beliefs cause him little concern. He looks upon Sunday as a day of recreation, a day in which to seek amusement, and *he will.* To this man Easter means what? Just another Sunday to dawdle through.

And the second man. He is religious. We do not mean a fanatic,—but a man whose religious beliefs have a large place in his life. Every Sunday with him, has a definite meaning. They are days of rest, days partly given up to worship, to communion with himself and his God. His Sundays supply him with spiritual strength for the six days to come. Now, to this man Easter means something. In his faith and belief Easter has a deep significance. It commemorates the resurrection of his Savior, Jesus Christ. His worship on this day to him is all-important. He knows that he is just a single unit among the thousands upon thousands who on Easter Sunday enter their churches and cathedrals to lift their voices in prayer to their God. He is proud to be a unit among this great throng of believers. Easter will leave him a better man.

Which of these two men are you? *Condensed* from *New York Tribune.*

II The First-Fruits of Them that are Asleep

Christ's Resurrection a Pledge of Ours. In the verses that immediately follow those printed in our text, Paul discusses what would be the situation if Christ had not risen from the dead. In that case, his preaching is vain, their faith is vain, they are in their sins, the dead in Christ have perished, we are of all men most pitiable. "But now", shouts Paul with triumphant voice, "All these things are not true, their exact opposites are true, for Christ is risen from the dead and become the first-fruits of them that are asleep in death, the pledge that those who sleep and are yet to sleep will also have a resurrection life." And in this letter to the Thessalonians Paul writes: We would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them that fall asleep: that ye sorrow not, even as the rest, who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also that are fallen asleep in Jesus, will God bring with him. "As the first sheaf of the harvest presented to God as a thank-offering was the pledge and assurance of the ingathering of the whole harvest, so the resurrection of Christ is a pledge and proof of the resurrection of his people."

This is the glorious truth of our Easter lesson. The how and the where we can leave unsolved, since we have the comfort of the thought that our friends who are fallen asleep in Jesus are "with the Lord". Ours is the clear hope of life with our Lord after death.

How different from the hopelessness of those who know not Christ and his resurrection! Sadly affirms Catullus, the great Roman writer: "The suns die and are able to return; as for us, when once our brief light goes out, we sleep in one perpetual night". Not so. We shall be ever with the Lord. On one side in the galleries of the Vatican there are heathen inscriptions from the tombs, such as this "Farewell; farewell; forever farewell". But on the other side are Christian inscriptions from the catacombs: "In peace"; "In Christ"; "In hope". It is not an eternal farewell when we lay away in the cemetery the bodies of our dead; they have not passed on into a perpetual night: they have but gone on before to be with the Lord.

Christ the firstfruits. "Died he, or in him did death die?" questions St. Augustine. "What a death that gave death its death-blow!"

I was Dead, I am Alive Forevermore. He had come to the great city—this "Little Rooster"—not many weeks before. The new name had been given in fun, not in ridicule, as he "crowed" forth the morning and the evening news. This sturdy little chap with his manly pluck, his generous spirit, his quick wit, and the tender pathos of his eye had won a place with his newsboy comrades. But they had not discovered what was back of the manly act and the pathetic eye. In a tenement room a sweet-spirited young mother had been lying on a bed of pain for many a day. "Little Rooster" had been her protector and lover, and in his burden-bearing his manliness had grown.

They came to a morning just before Easter, and the burden grew large; the mother said good-bye to her little lover, and quietly fell asleep. They said she was dead; he knew she was *gone;* what did it all mean?

Easter morning came, and he found himself looking up at the great stone church. He could not "crow" just now, he could not go with "the fellows", he could not peddle his papers. The chimes rang out upon the air, they seemed to be saying, "Be glad, be glad". He listened,—they drew him nearer; he ventured to peep in at the door. It was early; no one was near just then. The Boy looked, and there in green and white, he saw some letters: spelling them out he read, "I was dead; I am alive forevermore". "Why, that must mean Mother," said the little fellow, and he waited wondering.

A dear motherly woman stood beside him. "Won't you come in and sit down, my boy?" she said. In surprise she heard, "Tell me, ma'am, is my mother saying that? *Where is she? They have taken her away.*" And the great soul of the woman looked down at the manly boy brushing away a tear. "Come with me, and I will tell you," she answered.

In a little room on one side, undisturbed and alone, this teacher of many years taught the most beautiful Sunday-school "lesson" she had ever given. It was just a story of Jesus and his word, simply, briefly told with the message, "Because I live, ye shall live also". The boy's eager question was satisfied; his mother might echo the words, "I was dead; I *am* alive forevermore".

"Will you sell your papers for *me,* until you can be with your mother, 'where she is'?" presently asked this Comforter of boys, this Christian teacher. "You have not told me your name yet."

"Mother called me 'Brave John', but the boys—they say 'Little Rooster'."

"To me you will be 'Brave John'," said this church mother.

The organ pealed forth its grand triumphal strain; the service had been missed, but—a soul was awakening, a new life had begun in the light of Jesus' love. To the Sunday-school teacher as well as the little fellow this was a Resurrection Day. *Frederica Beard,* in *The Pilgrim Teacher.*

III O Grave, Where is Thy Victory?

O Glorious Grave of Jesus!

O vanquished grave of Jesus whose chill could work no change upon his heart!
O deep, deep grave of Jesus whose depths can hide a whole world's sin!
O glorious grave of Jesus through whose gloom lies the pathway to Immortal Life! *Ralph Conner,* in *The Recall of Love.*

The Powerlessness of the Grave. Our Lord has demonstrated the harmlessness of death, the powerlessness of the grave. To the natural eye death effaces all our beauty, and the grave is the last humiliation in which our strength and glory finally disappear. The empty grave of our Lord delivers us from the dominion of our senses, and convinces us that on our real selves death has no power.

The story is told that a chamber in a certain dwelling was reputed to be haunted, and the family regarded it with terror. But one night the father determined to sleep in it himself, and, coming forth the next morning all safe and sound, laughed away the fears of his children. So our Lord entered the grave, and dwelt among the dead; but in the morning he issued forth crying to his affrighted ones, "All hail!" and the gloomy chamber is divested of its terror. *Dr. Wm. Watkinson,* in *The Gates of Dawn.*

The Unhappy Belief of the Chinese. In a letter of a missionary of the China Inland Mission, the way in which Chinese regard their dead is thus told. Every year in the springtime, the Chinese hold the Ch'ing-Ming Feast in honor of the spirits of their departed ancestors. Some of you perhaps have a grandfather or grandmother, or even a mother or father, in heaven. When you think of them there, you know they are perfectly happy and at rest. You like to think of them as being full of joy, because they are in the presence of the Lord Jesus. When the Chinese think of their grandparents or parents who are already dead, they are afraid of them. They think these relatives, now dead, may harm them in some way unless they are kept in good humor by offerings and other attentions.

Not long ago I was out preaching in the country, and amongst those who listened was an old lady about seventy years of age. She said to me: "You Christians don't have paper burned at your funerals, nor do you have the Tao-ist priests perform the 'tso-tsai'." Tso-tsai is an idolatrous rite, during the performance of which the soul is supposed to be snatched out of hell. "Well", said the old lady, "I intend to have all this; my whole heart is set on it".

In vain we tried to convince her that a Christian, when dying, does not need these things. Will you pray for that poor old lady, and thousands more like her?

Let us Strive to be Worthy of Eternal Life. In the duel fought out in the Lord's grave it was not by some act of special, gratuitous deliverance that the entombed Spirit was rescued from the captivity of death, but because the containings of that Spirit were not amenable to captivity, "could not be holden of it", were of a sort that the powers of physical corruption could not assert over them their grim imperialism,—existed with a life that was distinctly alien to the empire of decay.

In the instance of the tree growing out of the rocky ledge of El Capitan its continuance was secured to it not by any act of providential interposition, but by the inextinguishable vigor of its own vitality. And quite like that, we may be assured, are the means by which we also are to have our own existence permanently maintained and to survive the crisis of that we call death. It is not so

much a question whether God will *keep* us alive, and by special exertion rescue us from an extinction and an oblivion of which we should otherwise be the victims, but whether, quite aside and apart from the body which is destined to corruption, we are possessed of life such that it is in its own nature inextinguishable, inherently eternal. In other words, whether our own spirit has become so possessed, so charged, with the Divine Spirit that we simply *cannot be blotted out,* so long as God lasts; bound up with him in one common bundle of life, able thus to have fulfilled in us those splendid Easter words of our Lord,—"Because I live you are going to live too". *Charles H. Parkhurst,* in *A Little Lower Than the Angels.*

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

If I believed in immortality as you believe in it, as you profess to do, I should live a far better life than you appear to live. I should strive more earnestly and bear more patiently. I do not think I should ever be troubled with a fear, or worried with an earthly burden. I think it would be all sunlight and joy if I believed as you do in eternal things—in resurrection and a life beyond in which all things will be made right. *Harriet Martineau.*

The resurrection time is not at Easter alone. There is not a moment of any day, in any year, when we may not rise with Christ into newness of life, and walk in his ways with transfigured faces. *Charles Sylvester Horne.*

Our Prayer. Our Father, on this great day of his triumph over sin and death, accept our gratitude for Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. For the self-denial, the sacrifice and suffering, the loneliness and misunderstanding, the courage and love by which upon this earth he won for us the assurance that death is not the end of life, we thank thee. (*Miss Slattery.*)

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. "There are No Dead." See the *Outlook,* p. 979, Aug. 30, 1913.
2. The First Epistle to the Corinthians. See pp. 33-36 of our Introduction.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. Which Herod was it that put James to death and Peter in prison? (*Guide,* p. 190.) 2. Was this Herod the one who was called Herod the Great? 3. How did it happen that he was King of Palestine? (*Guide,* p. 192.) 4. There were two apostles by the name of James; which one did Herod put to death? 5. What special privileges had James had during the life of Jesus? (Lk. 8.51; 9.28; Mk. 14.33.) 6. What had Jesus said to him in Mt. 20.23 which was now fulfilled? 7. What festival is meant by "The days of unleavened bread"? 8. When had Christ prayed for Peter that his faith might not fail him? (Lk. 22.31-32.) 9. How did Peter's friends spend the time of his imprisonment? 10. What parable did Jesus give to show that "One ought always to pray and not to faint"? (Lk. 18.1-8.) 11. What is a quaternion? 12. What was the Roman custom in regard to chaining prisoners? (*Guide,* p. 191.) 13. When and why had Herod himself been imprisoned and bound with an iron chain? (*Guide,* p. 192.) 14. Give an account of Peter's appearance at the house of Mary. (Acts 12.12-17.) 15. What did Herod do on hearing of Peter's escape? (Acts 12.18, 19.) 16. How did Herod die?

Questions to Think About. 1. Why were James and Peter the apostles whom Herod persecuted? 2. Why did Herod put James to death? 3. Why should James lose his life and Peter's life be spared, if our Golden Text is true? (*Guide,* p. 194.) 4. What effect would Peter's death at this time have had upon the Church? 5. Why did Herod wish to wait till the Passover was over before having Peter put to death? (*Guide,* p. 191.) 6. What part did the prayers of Peter's friends have in his deliverance? 7. Is prayer a power? 8. Are you using the power of prayer? 9. Why is it true that the most Christ-like prayer is prayer for others? 10. How many people do you pray for?

Memory and Note-Book Work. Memorize Helen Hunt Jackson's stanza, p. 196. In your Note Book about The Epistles of Paul, write what you know about the First Epistle to the Corinthians. In your Book about "Lessons from Paul's Words" write what he wrote to the Corinthians about the Risen Christ.

LESSON V—APRIL 30

PETER DELIVERED FROM PRISON

Golden Text

The angel of Jehovah encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them. Psalm 34.7.

LESSON Acts 12.1-19: verses 1-11 printed

MEMORIZE verse 11

1 Now about that time Herod the king put forth his hands to afflict certain of the church. 2 And he killed James the brother of John with the sword. 3 And when he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded to seize Peter also. And *those* were the days of unleavened bread. 4 And when he had taken him, he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers to guard him; intending after the Passover to bring him forth to the people. 5 Peter therefore was kept in the prison: but prayer was made earnestly of the church unto God for him. 6 And when Herod was about to bring him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers bound with two chains: and guards before the door kept the prison. 7 And behold, an angel of the Lord stood by him, and a light shined in the cell: and he smote Peter on the side, and awoke him, saying, Rise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands. 8 And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And he did so. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me. 9 And he went out, and followed; and he knew not that it was true which was done by the angel, but thought he saw a vision. 10 And when they were past the first and the second guard, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth into the city; which opened to them of its own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street; and straightway the angel departed from him. 11 And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a truth, that the Lord hath sent forth his angel and delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

I. Herod Kills James and Imprisons Peter, 1-4.
II. The Church Prays for Peter, 5.
III. Peter Delivered from Prison, 6-11.
IV. Surprise at the Home of John and Mark, 12-17.
V. Surprise at the Prison, Guards Put to Death, 19.
VI. Death of Herod, 20-23.

1. *About that time Herod the King.* This was Herod Agrippa I, the grandson of Herod the Great, and the time was the Passover of 44 A. D. See the Historical Background.—*To afflict certain of the church.* To persecute the foremost followers of Christ.

2. *James the brother of John.* They were the sons of Zebedee and Salome, the latter thought to have been the sister of Mary, the mother of Jesus (Jn. 19.25). They were two of the three favorite disciples of Jesus, Mt. 4.21. James and Judas are the only ones of the Twelve whose deaths are recorded in the New Testament.—*With the sword.* He had James beheaded.

3. *When he saw that it pleased the Jews.* At the Passover season they were especially hostile to those who differed from them, and Herod, as Josephus says of him, "rejoiced in living in good reputation" among his subjects.—*The days of unleavened bread.* The Passover was so called because no leaven, or yeast, was allowed in Jewish homes while the festival lasted.

4. *Four quaternions of soldiers.* Four sets of men, one for each watch; and four men in each set, two of whom were chained to Peter in the cell, and

two were on guard outside, verse 6.—*Intending after the Passover to bring him forth to the people.* For execution. Herod was nominally a Jew and most careful in all Jewish observances, and executions were not carried out during the Passover.

5. *Prayer was made earnestly.* "The word 'earnest' means 'to stretch out'. It implies a bow drawn to its fullest length and strength. So should our hearts be in prayer" (*Griffith Thomas*).—*Unto God.* "I wish that I could just burn those two words into every heart, so that from this time on, whenever we pray, in public or in private, they would stand right before us; and that before we prayed a syllable of prayer we would be sure every time that we had really come into the presence of God and were actually talking to him" (*Torrey*).—*For him.* "No kindnesses shown in act are so important or so essential a part of friendship, as prayer for our friend" (*J. R. Miller*).

6. *When Herod was about to bring him forth, the same night.* The night before his trial and execution as planned by Herod. "God's time to help is when things are brought to their last extremity" (*Matthew Henry*). "The eventful intervention at the very last moment, and yet at a sufficiently early moment, tested faith. And look how beautifully all bore the test. The man that was to be killed to-morrow is lying quietly sleeping in his cell, and whilst he was asleep Christ was awake, and the brethren were awake. Their faith was tested, and it stood the test, and thereby was strengthened, and Peter's patience and faith were deepened and confirmed" (*Maclaren*).—*Bound with two chains.* See below.

10. *The iron gate that leadeth into the city.* The outer gate of the prison.

11. *When Peter was come to himself.* Compare the similar expression in the parable of the Prodigal Son. Peter had been dazed, and had thought his experience unreal.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

4. *Intending after the Passover to bring him forth.* Herod purposed putting Peter to death, but as a strict Jew he would not pollute the festival by shedding blood, and therefore had Peter imprisoned till after the Passover. There were four modes of execution lawful among the Jews, stoning, decapitation, burning and strangling.

6. *Peter was sleeping between two soldiers.* Soldiers act in the East in the capacity of our policemen, their duties being similar to those of the French gendarmes, or armed police. Those who act in this way in Palestine are called *Zabteeych.* This will explain why in the New Testament soldiers are always said to be employed where we should employ policemen. *James Neil,* in *Pictured Palestine.*

6. *Bound with two chains.* It was the Roman custom to fasten a chain from the right wrist of a prisoner to the left wrist of a soldier. When extraordinary precautions were taken, as in the case of Peter, the prisoner was chained to two soldiers, one on each side. Matthew Henry reminds us that tradition "makes a mighty rout about these chains" and claims that one of the soldiers kept them for a sacred relic, that they were long afterward presented to Eudoxia the Empress, and that many miracles were wrought by them. One of the Roman Catholic feast days (the first of August) is called *Festum Vinculorum Petri,* The Feast of Peter's Chains.

A Prisoner Chained to Two Soldiers

10. *The iron gate that leadeth into the city opened to them of its own accord.* The iron gate which led out upon the street from the prison courtyard would, of course, be strongly secured. Van Lennep, in "Bible Lands", thus describes an oriental city gate to which the prison gate may have been somewhat similar. "The gates are large, massive, and two-leaved, built of heavy timber, plated

with iron. A strong iron bar, hooked at one end, hangs from a heavy ring of the same metal, made fast in a strong post, built into the wall behind each fold of the gate. When the gate is closed, the hooks are set into other iron rings, on the back of its folds, enabling the gate to resist a very heavy pressure from without. The lock is massive and of wrought iron, and the long-handled, ponderous key is carried by the keeper of the gate in his belt, or hung from a nail in his little room close by."

8. *Gird thyself, bind on thy sandals, cast thy garment about thee.* Peter had removed his sandals, which were only soles bound on his feet by leather straps or thongs, and had removed his girdle, which confined the folds of his long abba or outer garment. At night this woolen garment was thrown over the owner as a blanket, and therefore was to be then returned if taken in pledge, Ex. 22.26, 27.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. Who were the first persecutors of the church? What miracle and what doctrine of Peter led them to arrest him? What did they order him not to do? What was his answer? Why was he freed? Why was Peter again imprisoned? How was he liberated? Who were the next persecutors of the church? Who suffered martyrdom at their hands? What was his position in the church? Who was the leader of the persecutors? What put an end to his persecuting? Who said that "the Spirit maketh intercession for us"? What prayer for others did Solomon offer—a lesson of last year?

Herod Agrippa I, Persecutor of the Church. The first persecutors of the disciples were the Sadducees and chief priests (Acts 4.1; 5.17); the next, the Pharisees with Paul as their leader. A new persecutor then arose through the civil authority, in the person of Herod Agrippa I.

Coin of Herod Agrippa I.

Herod I, or Herod the Great as he is better known, died soon after the birth of Jesus, and his kingdom, you remember, was divided among his three sons. Herod Antipas, the son to whom Galilee and Perea were given, was the Herod who put John the Baptist to death. Aristobulus was another son whom Herod the Great had accused of plotting against him, who was strangled by order of the court at his father's wish. The son of Aristobulus, the grandson of Herod the Great, is known in history as Herod Agrippa I. Josephus calls him "Agrippa the Great."

The early life of Herod Agrippa I was spent in Rome. He lived there in such luxury and magnificence that his debts forced him to take refuge in Judea. Because of his quarrels and intrigues he was again compelled to flee, and having succeeded in obtaining money in Alexandria he revisited Rome. The Emperor Tiberius received him kindly and with his son, Caius Caligula, he became very friendly. When Tiberius learned that Herod had said he hoped Caius would soon succeed to the throne, he had him imprisoned, where he remained chained to a soldier until Caius Caligula became emperor in A. D. 37. Caligula set him at liberty, presented him with a gold chain weighing as much as the iron one with which he had been bound, and gave him the tetrarchy of Philip, with the title of King. From this emperor he also received later the tetrarchy of Galilee and Perea. When Caligula was murdered and Claudius became emperor Herod succeeded in winning his favor also. Claudius added to Herod's realm Judea and Samaria, so that between the years 41 and 44 A. D. he ruled all Palestine as had his grandfather, Herod the Great.

His ambition went still farther, he wished to become an independent king, and he needed the favor of the Jews. Because he had prevented Caligula from carrying out his purpose of having his statue placed in the temple, in the Holy of Holies, he was already popular with his subjects, despite his introduction of Roman customs. He would court their favor further by persecuting this new sect which the Jewish leaders so hated, and he began with the most prominent apostles, knowing that this would arouse "the expectation of the Jews".

The Close of "The Acts of Peter". After his deliverance from prison, Peter went to the house of Mary, the mother of John Mark, where many of the disciples were met in prayer, and knocked for admission. A young girl named Rhoda ran to the door, but when she heard Peter's voice in her joy she left him standing there and ran to tell the good news to the others. "Thou art mad", they exclaimed, while Peter continued knocking. They opened the door and were amazed to see Peter himself standing there. Quieting their excitement, he told them how he had been freed, and then went elsewhere for safety.

This is the last that we hear about "the acts of Peter". Jerusalem has been the headquarters of the Christian Church until now, and Peter has been the leading spirit among the apostles. The center now changes from Jerusalem to Antioch in Syria, and the leadership, as far as we know from The Acts, to Paul. Peter lived twenty years longer, but we have only incidental allusions to him in the Epistles.

The Death of Herod. Herod had the matter of Peter's escape from prison investigated and ordered the guards put to death. He returned to Cæsarea and soon afterwards a deputation of men from Tyre and Sidon came to see him, Herod addressed them from the throne; and they, wishing to gain his favor, for he had been displeased with them, shouted, "The voice of a god, and not of a man". In the midst of such adulation, which he craved, he was stricken with a terrible disease and died.

Herod's death in 44 A. D. establishes the date of this lesson as the Passover week of that year.

Places. The scene of the lesson is Jerusalem. The location of the prison is not known, though many claim that it was the Tower of Antonia. For Cæsarea see p. 176.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Prayer was made earnestly of the church unto God for Peter. And Peter was saved. Equally earnest prayer must have been offered for James. And Herod killed James with the sword. These facts are a challenge to you—to get your pupils' thoughts about the nature of prayer and its answer, and if they are cherishing wrong thoughts, to set them right.

A Sunday-school teacher in a poor district in England spoke about the beautiful weather one Sunday. "Yes", said a little girl, "I know why it is fine today; I asked God last night to let us have a lovely day". "But what if it had rained instead?" asked the teacher. "I should have said that God was thinking about the flowers", the girl answered. That little girl had been well taught.

Why should one pray? What benefits come from prayer? Should prayer consist wholly of petitions? Should prayer be wholly for self? In what spirit should one pray? Is prayer always answered? Is "No" an answer to prayer? Ask your pupils these and other questions about prayer.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Late one evening a gentleman came home unexpectedly, and found his house closed. He could not arouse any one, and he had no key with him. Going to a near-by drug store, he telephoned to the central office several miles away, and asked the one in charge to ring up his house number and tell the one who answered that he was on the front steps waiting to get in. The ringing of the telephone near his room aroused the sleeping butler to answer it, and soon he was at the door letting in the owner of the house.

It was a long way round by which this gentleman accomplished his purpose, but it was a very efficient way. In our lesson to-day the disciples who are in the same city with Peter, they in their homes and he in prison, can do nothing themselves to free him. We see them send their messages a long way round by the way of the throne of God, and the prison gate opens to let Peter pass through.

For Older Pupils. What two strong personalities have we in our lesson? What relation was this Herod of Herod the Great? What do you know about him? Herod Agrippa on the throne, Peter in prison—which is the stronger man? Herod is the typical persecutor; Peter, the typical leader of the church. Herod

is the favorite of Rome and the popular idol of the Jewish people; Peter is alone, helpless, securely guarded by soldiers and chains in an inner prison. Herod has all the resources of the great Roman Empire back of him; Peter has back of him the prayers of a faithful company of followers of Jesus Christ. Which one is defeated? Why? To quote a line of Tennyson's, Peter's friends are

Battering at the gates of heaven with stones of prayer,

and their prayer prevails; Peter is freed.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Intercessory Prayer

The Condition of Prevailing Prayer. In a single sentence the apostle John gives the condition which must be fulfilled if our prayers are to prevail with God. "This is the boldness which we have toward him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us." The church did not know that it was the will of God that Peter should not at this time, like Stephen and James, suffer a martyr's death, but they prayed earnestly, nevertheless, that Peter's life might be spared. They must have prayed submissively, asking only that their prayers be granted if it were God's will. What did Jesus mean when he said: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you; for everyone that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened"? He did not mean that we have a claim on God which he is bound to acknowledge if we ask it. He meant that whatever we ask in the name and in the spirit of Jesus himself, whatever, therefore, is in accordance with the divine will, will be granted us. Our prayer will be answered in our way, if it is the right way, but if it is not, then in God's own way; as Whittier beautifully says:

All as God wills, who wisely heeds
To give or to withhold,
And knoweth more of all my needs
Than all my prayers have told!

A Missionary's Experience. Henry Martyn was greatly helped in his work in India by the consciousness that his friends were praying for him. "How happy am I when, in preparing for the work of declaring his glory among the Gentiles, I think that many of the Lord's saints have this day been remembering their unworthy friend. I feel as if I could never be tired with prayer."

"Will You Pray for Them, too?" During the German bombardment of Rheims it was impossible for the Salvation Army to hold any meetings, but the officers made good use of the time by visiting the people in distress and ministering to their spiritual needs. One day the lieutenant was holding a little service with a family in the cellar of their house when the door was burst open and there entered a Bavarian soldier and one of the Prussian Guard. With great presence of mind the Salvation Army officer continued her prayer, and when she had finished one of the soldiers, who spoke French, came to the Army lassie, and with tears running down his face, showed her a portrait of his wife and children. "Will you offer a prayer for them, too," he asked, "that they may be kept from all harm till I get home again?"

II Answered Prayer

God Answers Prayer. In 1836-7 the two missionaries, the Murrays, had gone to Tutuela in the South Seas. They had worked with some success; there were several little churches established through the island and all was favorable and promising, but all at once, on one given night, throughout the island in each place where there was a church, an extraordinary spiritual movement began; the people came in asking for baptism, in the assemblies they rose up confessing their sins; there was a great cry for God in these churches—the people were gathered into the church and the work lasted and is lasting still. These two missionaries were almost afraid; they thought it was some unwholesome disturbance at first. They could not account for it at all, but they saw it was God, and they gathered in the fruit. It was many months after that the news came from the old country, from Scotland, that in Jedburgh, the town from

which these two had come, on that very day a great spiritual movement had come and they had met together and were praying for Tutuela and the missionaries that very day, at that very time; and the prayers that ascended there in Jedburgh for the coming of the Kingdom of God descended on Tutuela at the other side of the world. There could be no doubt about it that the intercession had prevailed.

Let me give you a personal experience. Ten years ago I wrote a little book called "The Open Secret", a manual of devotion, and I had in it fly-leaves at the end of each day's prayer, to fill in with the names of those I wished to pray for, or the objects, public or missionary, I wished to remember constantly before God. Ten years have gone. I take up that little book. I never read a word of the printed matter. That has passed away, but those written words are the most marvelous record and the most conclusive demonstration that God answers prayer. Name after name upon those pages for whom I pleaded that they might be brought to God I have had to tick off with an "Answered". Matter after matter that seemed impossible that had been brought to God week after week, I had to mark or cross out as "answered". No one could shake me in the conviction that that daily prayer brought before God, remembering before him these persons whom I desired to help or to bless or those matters I desired to further, has produced the answer; for the cause and the effect are there. I recommend you all to begin, if you have not done it, with a prayer list, and to intercede with those names before you. In ten years you will be in a position in which no power on earth can shake your conviction that the real thing in life is communion with God and the one way of doing anything is to get him to do it and to leave yourself in his hands. From an *Address* at the *Student Volunteer Convention,* by *Dr. Robert Forman Horton.*

Prayer and Missions. Pastor Gossner sent out into the foreign field one hundred and forty-four missionaries. Besides providing outfit and passage, he had never less than twenty missionaries dependent directly upon him for support. How he carried this and his other Christian work, a sentence from the funeral address read over his grave will explain: "He prayed up the walls of a hospital and the hearts of the nurses; he prayed the mission stations into being and missionaries into faith; he prayed open the hearts of the rich, and gold from the most distant lands." *Dr. Robert E. Speer,* in *Prayer and Missions.*

There is No Wasted Prayer. "He is the child of many prayers", said a heart-broken father to a noted English minister, as he begged the latter to tell his wayward boy, should he chance to come across him in his travels, that he would be gladly welcomed home.

Months later, the minister made this father's appeal the basis of a sermon on prayer. Suppose the boy never came back; were the prayers wasted? This was the question which he faced. "Even so, the prayers had been worth while; they had had their mission in shaping the lives of father and mother; they had brought one man and one woman to share the solicitude of God for those who go astray; they might have exerted some influence, although it was lost to human knowledge, on the life of a wayward boy, an influence not to be denied because it could not be defined; and yet more, in ways that could not be traced by the linking of effect to cause, they had spun silken cords round a heart remote that might yet feel their pull, and come back again."

That sermon was printed and came to our country, and it was read by a young man who was situated as was that wayward youth in England; and it led him to arise and go to his father. The "child of many prayers" has not yet returned, but that father and mother in that London home are still praying for him.

"There is no wasted prayer, for prayer is the voice of the soul whispering in the ear of God, and no drawing of the soul within whispering reach of God is wasted. No unselfish love, poured out though it be on the sand of a barren life, is wasted; but it is caught up by the warm love of God into the sky above, and rains itself somewhere and makes blossoms grow."

III The Opened Door

The Lord hath Sent his Angel. God hath a thousand keys to open a thou-

sand doors for the deliverance of his own when it has come to the greatest extremity. Let us be faithful and care for our own part, which is to do and suffer for him, and lay God's part on him, and leave it there; duties are ours, events are the Lord's. When our faith goeth to meddle with events, and to hold a court (if I may so speak) upon God's providence, and beginneth to say, "How wilt thou do this or that?" we lose ground; we have nothing to do there, it is our part to let the Almighty exercise his own office and steer his own helm. *Samuel Rutherford.*

Yet this one thing I learn to know,
Each day more surely as I go,
That doors are opened, ways are made,
Burdens are lifted or are laid,
By some great law unseen and still.
Helen Hunt Jackson.

How Prison Doors were Opened for a Chinese Statesman. Many inquiries have been sent to me, "How did you get information that Sun was imprisoned in the Legation?" As usual, a woman came to the rescue. The wife of one of the English servants in the Legation heard from her husband of the piteous plight of the imprisoned Chinese and sent me the following letter. "There is a friend of yours imprisoned in the Chinese Legation here since last Sunday; they intend sending him out to China, where it is certain they will hang him. It is very sad for the poor man, and unless something is done at once he will be taken away and no one will know it. I dare not sign my name, but this is the truth, so believe what I say. Whatever you do must be done at once, or it will be too late". The note reached my house at 11:30 P. M. on the night of Saturday, October 17, 1896. A ring at the door-bell brought me from my bed. I found no one at the door, but observed and picked up the letter, which had been pushed in below the door. It was this woman who started the machinery for Sun's release. Had this humble woman failed in her purpose the regeneration of China would have been thrown back indefinitely, for the last of the reformers would have lost his life and the Manchus would be still in power. *James Cantlie,* in *Sun Yat Sen.*

Keys Used in Opening Doors. The marks of God are seen plainly in the rapid unlocking of long-shut gates, and in the peculiar keys used by him for their opening. When the nineteenth century began, the enterprise of missions seemed, to the worldly wise and prudent, not only vague but visionary—hopelessly, foolishly, chimerical. Cannibalism in the Islands of the Sea, fetishism on the dark continent, a rigid caste system in India, an exclusive policy in China, intolerance in papal lands, and absolute prohibition in Moslem territory—these were a few of the hundred barriers which on every side seemed impassable. Taken singly they were formidable—taken together they constituted an encircling wall, too strong to batter down, too high to scale. Even if outer barriers could be passed, it would still be necessary to confront ignorance, idolatry, superstition, depravity, everywhere and, in most cases, conspiring together to rear before the church other impassable walls, with gates of steel. The only welcome awaiting God's messengers was that of cannibal ovens, merciless prisons, or martyrs' graves. But, as the little band advanced, on every hand the walls of Jericho fell, and the iron gates opened of their own accord. India, Siam, Burma, China, Japan, Turkey, Africa, Mexico, South America, the papal States, and Korea, were successively and successfully entered. Within five years, from 1853 to 1858, new facilities were given to the entrance and occupation of seven different countries, together embracing half the world's population. There was also a remarkable subsidence of obstacles. At the same time God was raising up workers in unprecedented numbers, and men and women so marvelously fitted for the exact work and field as to show unmistakably foresight and purpose. *Arthur T. Pierson,* in *The Modern Missionary Century.*

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

"We are always getting into straits of some sort which shut us up as in stone walls or iron cages. We know the remedy. The disciples did not petition

Herod, but Heaven; and Heaven granted an order of release which Herod could not gainsay. Do not let our poor, ignorant reasonings about prayer stultify our Divine instinct." The disciples prayed for Peter's life although they knew not that it was God's will that he should live. I, too, may pray for the desire of my heart, but I must pray as Jesus prayed, "Not my will, but thine be done." I will think of God as my Father and of prayer as a privilege and a power, and will cultivate my prayer life so that I may have the joy of living in trustful fellowship with my heavenly Father, and also the strength and the help that comes from communion with him.

Is my prayer life self-centered? Do I know the joy of intercessory prayer? Sincere prayer for any one will fit my soul for the performance of whatever kind, helpful deed I can do for him, will help me to be the agent through whom God will answer some of my prayers.

Our Prayer. Our heavenly Father, grant, we pray thee, a blessing upon all who now bow before thee, the blessing which each one needs in his difficulties and troubles or in his successes and joys. Send thy blessing, we beseech thee, upon all who are laboring for thee, make them strong in faith and hope and love; give them the mind that is in Christ Jesus that they may show forth his Spirit wherever they go. Let thy kingdom come and thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

SUBJECT FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

The art of prayer. See the first two topics; article with this title in the *Outlook* for August 11, 1906; "Quiet Talks about Prayer," by S. D. Gordon; "Drawing on Unseen Resources," *Missionary Review of the World,* April, 1914, p. 291.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. What is the reference in verse 19? 2. How were the disciples supported on their journeys? (*Guide,* p. 200.) 3. Where is Phœnicia? 4. Cyprus ? 5. What can you learn about Antioch? (*Guide,* p. 202.) 6. Where has Paul been since his conversion? (*Guide,* p. 201.) 7. How often is the word *Christian* used in the Bible? (Bible Concordance.) 8. How were the terms *Puritan* and *Methodist* regarded when they were first used? 9. What is Paul's definition of a Christian in 1 Cor. 1.2? 10. What does Micah 6.8 say is religion? 11. Look up these references and tell what sort of man Jesus deemed a Christian: Mt. 3.16, 17; 5.1-12; 22.37-40; Mk. 14.32-36; Lk. 4.1-21; 10.25-37; 18.18-30. 12. What generous spirit was shown by the church of Antioch? 13. When Jesus set apart the twelve for special work what did he do? (Lk. 6.12, 13.) 14. What does Paul call himself in Rom. 1.1? 15. What is said about Paul's "calling" in Acts 9.15?

Questions to Think About. 1. Would the church in Jerusalem naturally be pleased that the gospel was preached to Gentiles? 2. Were there many wealthy and influential members of the early church? (*Guide,* ¶ 2, p. 200.) 3. What is the meaning of "that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord"? (*Guide,* ¶ 2, p. 199.) 4. How do you think "the Holy Spirit said", verse 2? (*Guide,* p. 200.) 5. What is meant by "ministered unto the Lord", verse 2? (*Guide,* p. 200.) 6. What illustration of good coming out of evil in the lesson? 7. Did the disciples realize that they were founders of a new religion? (*Guide,* ¶ 5, p. 199.) 8. What is the greatest thing that Barnabas ever did? Why? 9. Why is Antioch called the second Birthplace of Christianity? (*Guide,* p. 201.) 10. Why is it called the cradle of missions? (*Guide,* p. 202.) 11. Who were the first foreign missionaries? 12. In what ways had Barnabas shown fitness for missionary work? 13. What is your church doing for foreign missions? 14. The word *Christian* means literally "Christ's man": could his followers have a better designation? 15. What did the enemies of Jesus call him in mockery? 16. Are all actual Christians called Christians? 17. Are all called Christians actual Christians? 18. What is the difference between called-Christians and actual Christians? 19. What do you think it means to be a Christian?

Note-Book Work. In your book about the Expansion of the Early Church, write Chapter XII, Peter Delivered from Prison.

LESSON VI—MAY 7

THE MISSIONARIES OF ANTIOCH

Golden Text

Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations. Matthew 28.19

LESSON Acts 11.19-30; 12.25-13.12: verses 11.19-26; 13.1-3 printed

MEMORIZE verses 13.2, 3

11 19 They therefore that were scattered abroad upon the tribulation that arose about Stephen travelled as far as Phœnicia and Cyprus, and Antioch, speaking the word to none save only to Jews. 20 But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus. 21 And the hand of the Lord was with them; and a great number that believed turned unto the Lord. 22 And the report concerning them came to the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas as far as Antioch: 23 who, when he was come, and had seen the grace of God, was glad; and he exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord; 24 for he was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord. 25 And he went forth to Tarsus to seek for Saul; 26 and when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that even for a whole year they were gathered together with the Church, and taught much people; and that the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.

13 1 Now there were at Antioch, in the church that was *there,* prophets and teachers, Barnabas, and Symeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen the foster-brother of Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. 2 And as they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. 3 Then, when they had fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

I. Disciples Driven from Jerusalem, 11.19.
II. Preaching to Gentiles in Antioch, 11.20, 21.
III. The Church at Jerusalem sends Barnabas to Investigate, 11.22-24.
IV. Barnabas Secures Paul's Help, 11.25-26.
V. Antioch Christians Send Relief to Jerusalem, 11.27-30.
VI. Barnabas and Paul Return from Jerusalem with Mark, 12.25.
VII. Barnabas and Paul Sent forth as Missionaries, 13.1-3.

19. *They therefore.* See Acts 8.1-4.

20. *Men of Cyprus and Cyrene.* Greek-speaking Jews, more liberal in their views of Gentiles than Hebrew-speaking Jews of Palestine.—*Greeks.* The interpretation of this whole event hinges upon the meaning given to this word. There are two words in the Greek: (1) Ἑλληνιστής Hellenistes, a Grecian, a Hellenist or Greek Jew, a Jew by descent and training and religion, but born outside of Palestine under Greek influence, and (2) Ἕλλην Hellenis, a Greek, a Gentile. Both words occur in different manuscripts. The Revisers accept the second word, and the interpretation therefore is that the gospel was preached to Gentiles.

21. *The hand of the Lord.* "Compare Luke 1.66. The hand is a symbol of power; here probably, as in 4.30, it is stretched forth to heal, thus affording a manifest sign of divine approval" (*Abbott*).

22. *The church which was in Jerusalem.* We can well understand that this revolutionary step did not please them, but they did not hastily condemn it, as we might have expected them to do, but sent a reliable messenger to investigate

the situation. Barnabas was doubtless chosen because he was himself a native of Cyprus and would be inclined to view the situation sympathetically.

23. *Had seen the grace of God.* This may refer to the genuineness of the conversion of the Gentiles, or to the manifestation of the Spirit as in 10.45. "He knew the old fruit, even when he found it growing in a new garden. He recognized the old tokens of grace, even when they were revealed in strange conditions. And these are the folk we want in our own time. We need people who can see Christ when he appears in a new dress, who can discern the cause of the Kingdom when it shows itself in novel conditions. There is great work for Barnabas nowadays, for everywhere God is revealing himself in new and diverse manners, and watchful, faithful men will love his appearing" (*Jowett*).—*That with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.* The Greek word προθεσις translated *purpose,* means literally *setting forth,* and is the word which in Mt. 12.4 is translated *shewbread,* "the loaves of the setting-forth", the loaves set before, or consecrated to, God. Their hearts were to be consecrated to God. The Greek word προσμένειν translated *cleave* is translated *continue* in Acts 13.43, and the exhortation is that of Jesus himself when he said, "Abide in me". If the Jews and Greeks at Antioch did as Barnabas exhorted them to do, there would be no trouble among them, for they would all live together in Christian unity, sons of one Father, brothers of one Lord.

24. *Full of the Holy Spirit.* Recall the reason given for the choice of the Seven, Acts 6.5.

25. *He went forth to Tarsus to seek for Saul.* See p. 203, and ¶ 1, p. 204.

26. *The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch.* Hitherto the disciples had been to the Gentiles only a Jewish sect, for they were practically all Jews or Jewish proselytes. Now, however, great numbers of Gentiles have become disciples, and a name is needed which shall include both Jews and Gentiles, and shall be descriptive of their creed. The thought had never come to the disciples themselves that they were founders of a new religion. They no more meant to separate from the Church of Judea than John Wesley meant to separate from the Church of England, to employ an oft-used comparison. They called themselves disciples, learners, saints, consecrated to God; the faithful, or believers, full of faith in Jesus as the Christ; brethren, sons of one Father. The new term of *Christians* was not adopted by them during the history recorded in the Acts. It is used only twice again in the New Testament: once, when King Agrippa accuses Paul of thinking that he can easily make "a Christian" of him (Acts 26.28); and once in 1 Peter 4.16.

It has been thought that the nickname was given by the people of Antioch in derision, in the same spirit as since then have been given the now honored names of Puritan, Wesleyan, Methodist, Protestant. The Greek word for Christ is χριστός, Christos, and it is very similar to another Greek word χρηστός Chrestos, which was sometimes used ironically for "a good fellow". The people of Antioch were noted for their witty epigrams, and in their term of χριστιανοί, Christianoi, there may have been a play upon the words. On the other hand, it may have been only natural that they should have called the followers of Christ, Christ's-men, just as they called the followers of Pompey, Pompey's-men, or Pompeiani.

Civis Romanus sum! I am a Roman citizen! was the proud claim which in all lands at this time produced especial rights and favors. χριστιανός εἰμί! I am a Christian! became later the equally proud claim which produced grievous tortures and even death. It had become a sacred name when Julian became Roman emperor in the middle of the fourth century. He wished to revive the old Jewish term of contempt, and called the Christians "Galileans", even trying to enforce the change by a public decree. His successor, Jovian, declared himself a Christian, and one of his first decrees was the celebrated edict which placed the Christian religion on a legal basis.

27-28. *One of the prophets named Agabus.* "The gift of prophecy specially distinguished the apostolic from the subapostolic and later ages. It was widely diffused, being exercised by private Christians, and even by women in the Church assemblies. Generally it took the form of inspired exhortation or instruction, but was sometimes predictive. The official prophets who were recognized as possessing the gift to the fullest extent ranked next to the apostles, and were regarded with them as the 'foundation upon which the Church was built'

(Eph. 2.20). The chief product of Christian prophecy is the inspired New Testament" (*One Volume Commentary*).

13.1. *In the church that was there.* In the community of Christians, not in a church building.—*Prophets and teachers.* God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, 1 Cor. 12.28.—*Lucius of Cyrene.* Probably one of the men of Cyprus who first preached to the Greeks of Antioch. —*Manaen.* The foster-brother of Herod. This Herod was the son of Herod the Great, tetrarch of Galilee and Perea. He was banished from his tetrarchy in A. D. 39. According to Deissmann, "foster-brother" was a court-title of honor, like "the friend of the King" in the Old Testament. According to Josephus, when Herod was yet a boy, Menahem (Manaen) had assured him that he would be king, and when the prediction was fulfilled, Menahem became a special object of Herod's favor. Nothing is known about Symeon and Lucius; possibly they were also men of high degree. "In the days of the Apostles, and as long as Christianity was a proscribed religion, the numbers of the wealthy and learned and powerful belonging to it were still comparatively few, and the body of the membership of the Church consisted of the humbler and middle ranks of society. The wealthy and noble must always be few in comparison with others in the Church, for this if for no other reason, that there are fewer of them. Even yet the greater part of our Christian congregations does not consist of nobles and millionaires, but of persons drawn from the intermediate and humble classes of society" (*James Orr*).

13.2. *As they ministered to the Lord.* As they were carrying on the church services of prayer and worship. From the Greek word λειτουργεω (λειτουργία leitourgia) translated *ministered* comes our word *liturgy*. It is the same word used in Luke's Gospel in regard to Zacharias' service as a priest in the temple. —*The Holy Spirit said.* The Book of Acts has so many such expressions that it has been called "The Gospel of the Holy Spirit". The expression means that the forward movement now inaugurated was divinely ordained.—*Separate me Barnabas and Saul.* From now on Luke refers to them as apostles, ones sent.—*For the work whereunto I have called them.* The mission to the Gentiles. Compare Rom. 1.1: Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God.

3. *When they had fasted and prayed.* Recall Luke 6.12, 13.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

19. *They that were scattered abroad travelled as far as Antioch.* It is probable that they were poor, and depended for their food and lodging on the hospitality of the people on the way. A modern traveler says that the "Arabs are still as fond as ever of exercising the virtue of hospitality, but they take special care to entertain only such as can pay a round sum for the accommodation, or give their host a good dinner in return. The impecunious stranger may, it is true, claim the traditional three days' board and lodging, but he must be content with the scraps and prepared to hear very outspoken hints of the undesirability of his presence".

29. *The disciples determined to send relief unto the brethren that dwelt in Judæa.* The wealthier Jews of the Dispersion were accustomed to send relief to the poorer Jews of Palestine during times of famine or trouble. In this case the Gentile Christians joined with the Jewish Christians in sending relief to the Christians in Palestine, who would not be likely to receive aid through the orthodox Jews. Josephus records the fact that Helena, queen of Adiabene, and her son, who were Jewish proselytes, sent large supplies of food to Judea during this famine.

Mr. Gamahliel Wad-El-Ward sees in the Jewish custom of sending money to the Palestine Jews a reason for the laziness that so largely prevails today among the Jews of the cities of Palestine. In his book, "Palestine through the Eyes of a Native," he says: "The Jews are taught to be lazy and unthrifty from their infancy; for every man, woman and child, from the day of his birth to his death, receives a certain sum per week from a fund known as the *Halooka,* sent from all the Jews in the different parts of the world, for the maintenance of their brethren in the Holy Land, and for which they expect the residents of Canaan to pray for them when near the Holy Places, and to be their proxy at

their fast on the day of Atonement and at their rejoicings on the day of the Passover".

13.2. *And fasted.* "There was only one fast, the day of atonement, appointed in the Law. But it had become the practice for pious Jews to fast twice a week; and it was natural that those who became Christians should continue the habit. Fasting, then, was not especially a Christian practice. It was really part of the asceticism which was so highly esteemed and inculcated in all the oriental religions: we might almost call it a practice of natural religion in the East."

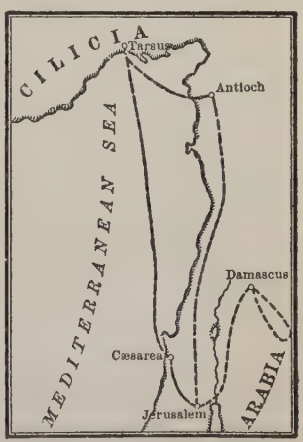
THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. How did Stephen meet his death? What result did his persecution have upon the followers of Christ? Where did they go? Who was the first Gentile convert of Christianity? Who gave directions to have him baptized? How had Peter learned to be so liberal? What have the disciples been called in the history of the Early Church thus far studied? What city has been the headquarters of the church throughout the first twelve chapters of the Acts? What man has been the leader? Of what island was Barnabas a native? What generous gift of his has been recorded? What did he do for Paul after the latter's conversion? When the church at Jerusalem wished to understand about the preaching of the Gospel to the Samaritans, whom did they send? What was the result?

"The Second Birthplace of Christianity." The Acts in the nineteenth verse of the eleventh chapter returns to the persecution and scattering of the disciples which followed upon the martyrdom of Stephen. In chapters 9 and 10 we have heard how, as a consequence of that scattering, the gospel was carried to other parts of Palestine; now we learn how it was carried beyond Palestine, as far as Antioch in Syria, and of the way in which Christianity became a new religion. It was a tremendous innovation, the preaching to Gentiles at Antioch, and because of its influence upon later events, Antioch has been called the second birth-place of Christianity.

The Acts of Paul. Since the first lesson of this Quarter about the conversion of Paul, we have left him waiting for an opportunity to begin his mission to the Gentiles, to which he felt himself called, while we have continued with the Acts of Peter. In class a review of Lesson I is desirable before taking up our story for today. Upon that wonderful event hinges all Paul's later career. As Sir William Ramsay makes Paul say: "In the divine reckoning, my life begins from my conversion and call to the Gentiles. If you would understand my life, you must refer every act in it to that primary revelation of the will of God in me."

After his conversion Paul needed time for meditation and communion with God to prepare himself for the work. "When it was the good pleasure of God to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the Gentiles," he says in his Epistle to the Galatians, "Straightway I conferred not with flesh and blood; neither went I up to Jerusalem to them that were apostles before me; but I went away into Arabia and again I returned unto Damascus". It is supposed by some that he went to Mount Sinai, but he may have gone no farther than the desert region near Damascus, which might be called "Arabia". In the Acts there is no mention of these three years in Arabia, for they had nothing to do with the public history of the Church and the chronological order of events cannot be given with certainty.



PAUL'S EARLY JOURNEYS

Paul preached in the synagogues of Damascus, proclaiming Jesus to be the son of God, and was soon compelled to flee, for the Jews sought to kill him. They watched the gates of the city day and night, but Paul's friends lowered him from the wall in a basket. Paul then went to Jeru-

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salem. The disciples there were afraid of him until Barnabas assured them that Paul "had seen the Lord in the way, and that he had preached boldly in the name of Jesus". Another plot of the Jews to kill him at Jerusalem was learned in time; he escaped to Cæsarea, and returned to his home in Tarsus. We do not meet him again till Barnabas seeks him in Tarsus and brings him to Antioch.

The Church at Antioch Sends Relief Funds to the Church at Jerusalem. During the year that Paul and Barnabas labored at Antioch prophets came there from Jerusalem and foretold a great famine in the days of the emperor Claudius. The disciples of Antioch, Jews and Gentiles, every one who was able, determined to send relief to "the brethren" in Judea. They made their collection and sent it by Barnabas and Paul, who, after fulfilling their mission, returned to Antioch, bringing with them a young man named John Mark.

The date of the journey of Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem with relief funds is generally given as 44 or 45 A. D. Dr. Ramsay dates it a year later, and identifies it with the visit mentioned by Paul in Galatians 2.1-10. The necessity of having it agree with Paul's account in Galatians is avoided by the natural supposition that Paul there does not relate all his visits to Jerusalem, but only those important for his argument in that epistle.

The departure of Paul on his first missionary journey marks a great epoch in Christian progress. We have seen the gospel preached to the Samaritans, have heard of Philip's baptizing the Ethiopian, of Peter's message to Cornelius the Roman centurion, of the admission of the Gentiles into the Church at Antioch, but now, for the first time, a deliberate plan is made to carry the good news to distant lands. The mission is first to the Jews, but before many months have passed, it becomes distinctly a mission to the Gentiles.

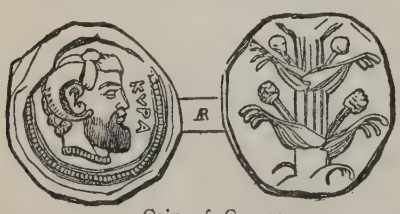
THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Phœnicia was the important commercial district forty-five miles broad extending for a hundred and twenty miles along the Mediterranean coast north of Palestine. At this time it formed a part of the Roman province of Syria.

For Cyprus, see p. 110. Salamis on the east was the largest city. Paphos on the extreme west was the abode of the Roman Prætor, and famed as the chief seat of the worship of Venus.

Cyrene was the capital of Libya, the country west of Egypt. For Tarsus, see p. 158.

Antioch, the city where Christianity was first preached to Gentiles in large numbers, and where the disciples were first called Christians, became "the mother church" of the Gentile Christians, as Jerusalem was the mother church of the Jewish Christians. It was the birth-place of Christian missions, for it was the starting point from which Paul set out on his three great missionary journeys. Antioch was on the Orontes in northern Syria, sixteen miles from the coast, where it had a seaport called Seleucia. It was the capital of the province of Syria and one of the most famous cities of the ancient world. With a population of half a million, it ranked as the third largest and wealthiest city of the Roman Empire, Rome being the first and Alexandria the second. The main street, which like the Street called Straight of Damascus, ran for five miles directly through the city, was paved with blocks of white marble and lined with double colonnades of marble. "Trees, flowers and fountains adorned the promenade, and poets sang of the beauty of the statue of Apollo and of the Nymphæum erected near the river." The majority of the population were Syrians, but they spoke the Greek language. As it was the seat of the Roman Governor, there were large numbers of Romans in the city, and the Jews, who had been given equal rights of citizenship with the Macedonians and Greeks on the founding of the city about 300 B. C., formed a considerable community.



Coin of Cyrene

To Antioch came the richly-laden caravans from Persia and India. Read the account in Ben Hur. It was a city of great luxury and equally great wickedness.

So notorious was it for its shameless corruption that Juvenal, the satirist, characterized the degradation of Rome by saying that "the Syrian Orontes has flowed into the Tiber". "Such a city was a field white for the harvest," observes a writer, "gasping like a thirsty land for a renovating and life-giving gospel, and the large fringe of Gentile adherents which hung around the synagagues offered the Christian evangelist a golden opportunity."

In the later history of the Church Antioch became famous for its school of theology. Ignatius the martyr was bishop here, and Chrysostom, who was later Patriarch of Constantinople (died in 407), was a native of Antioch. In the third and fourth centuries ten church councils were held here.

If you have no large map of the Mediterranean world bring to class one from a large school geography, or use the map facing p. 51 of this *Guide*. Let your pupils point out Palestine, Phœnicia and Syria and Cyprus, and locate Cyrene, Jerusalem, Damascus, Antioch, Tarsus.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

For several years after Paul's conversion we do not know what he was doing. The church seems to have lost sight of him, and as far as we know not one of the apostles cared what had become of him. He had vanished from their ken. Barnabas alone knew and cared. When opportunity offered, he set out in quest of Paul and he gave Paul the opportunity to make himself the greatest of the apostles. How much we are indebted to Barnabas, as the agent of God for setting Paul in his wonderful career of usefulness! Everywhere there are people whose talents are lost to God's kingdom, because no Barnabas has brought them out of their hiding places. A Sunday-school teacher has an unusual opportunity for being a Barnabas, a friend of the retiring folk, a bringer into light of great workers in God's vineyard. Have you a singer among your pupils whose gift may be used in God's house? Have you a thoughtful scholar who should be trained for leadership? Is there a quiet, retiring man or woman who needs to be brought out of his modest corner that he may serve?

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. In February we had a lesson about a man and his wife who sold a piece of property and pretended to give the entire amount received to the apostles for the relief of the poor. Who were they? In contrast to their hypocrisy Luke told about another man who brought the whole sum received from the sale of a field. Who was he? When Saul went back to Jerusalem after his journey to Damascus, he tried to join the disciples, but they were afraid of him, for they knew how he had persecuted the Christians. Then this same man, Barnabas, befriended him, and told the disciples how Saul had been changed from a persecutor to a follower of Jesus Christ. To-day we hear again about Barnabas. To what city is he sent by the Church at Jerusalem? Find the two cities on your map. About how far apart are they? Is Antioch in Palestine? To what empire do both cities belong? Who had gone from Jerusalem to Antioch before Barnabas? Why?

For Older Pupils. The history of the Christian Church during its first hundred years has been aptly called a tale of three cities—Jerusalem, Antioch, and Rome. The tale of Jerusalem as the center of Christian activity for fifteen years after the ascension of Jesus, we have now finished, and today we take up the tale of Antioch. Hitherto the Jews, with a few exceptions, have been the only believers in Jesus as the Christ; now the Gospel is carried to the Gentiles in Antioch and thence to the great cities of Asia Minor and Greece and Italy.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Seeking Men

Barnabas Discovered Paul. When Paul tried to join the Jerusalem church they were all afraid of him because of his evil reputation, unable to believe that he could have become a disciple. Barnabas believed in him, and bringing him to the disciples told his story to them so convincingly that they received him as a brother. But they did not entrust any great church work to his care. Ten or twelve years have passed since his conversion, and though Paul has been working

in Syria and Cilicia, he is still far from being a leader in the church. Then Barnabas needed help at Antioch. The need was urgent. The door of opportunity was opening to the whole Gentile world. He did not ask the authorities at Jerusalem to send one of their number. He knew himself just the right man for the place, one who had the necessary breadth of mind and sympathy of heart, a Hellenistic Jew like himself, familiar with Greek language and culture and thought. He sought and found Paul at Tarsus, and brought him to Antioch. And thus it came to pass that the man who was instrumental in driving away from Jerusalem the disciples who founded this church at Antioch, came to Antioch to help them in their work.

From Dr. J. R. Miller's book upon Paul I condense the following words about Barnabas as the discoverer of Paul:

One of the most distinguished scientific men of the latter part of the eighteenth century was Sir Humphry Davy. He made many great discoveries and added many valuable contributions to science. Among those who worked with Sir Humphry Davy as a journeyman and amanuensis was Michael Faraday. He was employed at first only at weekly wages in unimportant positions. But soon it became apparent that Faraday was himself possessed of a great genius for scientific researches and discoveries. It is said that when Sir Humphry Davy was asked what had been his greatest discovery, he said, "Michael Faraday". He claimed to have been himself the discoverer of Faraday, of his gifts and possibilities, and the means of bringing him to public notice and to his high place.

We may say that Barnabas was the discoverer of Paul. He seems to have been the only man who recognized in the young convert the abilities he had for work and service. But for Barnabas, Saul might have remained all his life in obscurity. Think what the world would have lost if Paul had not been discovered!

God is Seeking Men. A life-work of large and important scale tests God. Many a man has never known what it means really to believe in God, simply because his dilemma has never been sufficiently great to drive him to Omnipotent sources. He has not been engaged in a task which was mighty enough to require divine help. Phillips Brooks once said, "Pray for power to fit your tasks, not tasks to fit your power". We cannot expect the Almighty to lavish powers and abilities upon us if we do not have in mind definite and profitable ways to utilize them.

God is looking for men in the everyday walks of life to carry out his purposes. When he finds such men, full of ambitious daring and willingness to trust, because they are conscious that their undertakings are in line with the divine will, all of the forces and laws of heaven are made to serve them. *Clayton Sedgwick Cooper,* in *Bible Study in the Work of Life.*

II Called Christians

Who have a Right to be Called Christians. It is a long road from Peter the fisherman to Peter the martyr. A long, long road from the child in the kindergarten to the senior in the university. But the Peter who first heard Christ's "Follow me" and obeyed was just as truly in the school of Jesus as Peter the ripe and venerable apostle; the little tot in the kindergarten is just as much in the realm of education as the university graduate on Commencement Day.

I am not telling you how to be a perfect Christian all in a moment; but how to begin to be an imperfect Christian right here and now. A man can not make a complete journey in an instant, but he can begin instantly.

"But," you say, "what right have I to call myself a Christian if I do not measure up to the New Testament standard? What right have I to enroll myself as a loyal soldier if I do not obey my great Captain's commands?" It is enough to reply that no child is turned out of school for one bad lesson, or two, or a dozen, if the teacher knows that, on the whole, the child is trying to be a good pupil, and is daily striving to overcome his dulness. No boy or girl is ever expelled from the home because he or she fails to come up to the ideal of filial obedience and affection.

If when you begin to be a Christian you mean to obey, mean to be honest

and earnest, mean to resist evil, mean to do and be the right thing; if you are pained when you go astray, wounded when you do wrong and seek always to do better, Christ will take your will for the deed, your purpose for your performance, and the ruling choice of your life will be counted unto you for righteousness. Condensed from an article by *Dr. Robert F. Coyle,* in the *Homiletic Review.*

Not very much of a Christian. A few years ago I was making a brief tour among the colleges of Missouri. I remember one morning in a certain college village going over from the hotel to take breakfast with some of the boys, and coming back with one of the fellows whom I had just met. As we walked along, chatting away, I asked him quietly, "Are you a Christian, sir?" He turned quickly and looked at me with an odd, surprised expression in his eye and then turning his face away said: "Well, I'm a member of church, but—I don't believe I'm very much of a Christian". Then I looked at him and he frankly volunteered a little information. Not very much. He did not need to say much. You can see a large field through a chink in the fence. And I saw enough to let me know that he was right in the criticism he had made upon himself. We talked a bit and parted. But his remark set me to thinking.

A week later, in another town, speaking one morning to the students of a young ladies' seminary, I said afterwards to one of the teachers as we were talking: "I suppose your young women here are all Christians". That same quizzical look came into her eye as she said: "I think they are all members of church, but I do not think they are all Christians with real power in their lives". There was that same odd distinction.

A few weeks later, in Kansas City visiting the medical and dental schools, I recall distinctly standing one morning in a disordered room—shavings on the floor, desks disarranged—the institution just moving into new quarters, and not yet settled. I was discussing with a member of the faculty, the dean I think, about how many the room would hold, how soon it would be ready, and so on—just a business talk, nothing more—when he turned to me rather abruptly, looking me full in the face, and said with quiet deliberation: "I'm a member of church; I *think* I am a deacon in our church"—running his hand through his hair meditatively, as though to refresh his memory—"but I am not very much of a Christian, sir". The smile that started to come to my face at the odd frankness of his remark was completely chased away by the distinct touch of pathos in both face and voice that seemed to speak of a hungry, unsatisfied heart within. *Dr. S. D. Gordon,* in *Quiet Talks on Power.*

A Confucianist's Judgment of a Christian. A cultivated Chinese gentleman, a Confucianist, was given a New Testament by an American missionary, and asked to read it and consider the question of becoming a Christian. The Chinese, who was both intelligent and sincere, read the Gospels for the first time, and after a month or two of thought upon the subject, returned to the missionary, whom he had known intimately for many years, and said: "I have read this Book with great interest—it is a great Book, and I am inclined to try these teachings; but", he added, "according to this Book *you* are not a Christian".

The old missionary was somewhat startled at this surprising assertion and replied, "What do you mean?"

The Confucianist explained: "These writings appear to me to state clearly the characteristics of a Christian. I read that a Christian is a man who is not handicapped by anxiety and worry, and is usually a happy man. He is one who knows that his God, who cares for the falling of the smallest bird, will surely care for him. This Book commands him to cast his care upon God, and it assures him that he will receive the gift of Peace. I read that Jesus said to his disciples that he gave them his joy, and he furthermore said, 'Let not your heart be troubled'. I find that a Christian is an unworried man. But you are the most worried man I know. You impress me as having a thousand cares. Indeed you are anxious about details concerning which, as these Gospels teach, you should trust God. You are not an unworried man. You are not a Christian."

"Furthermore," the man of China insisted, "I read in the New Testament that God is Love; that, according to Jesus, there are simply two great commandments that sum up Christianity, namely: Love to God, and love to one's neighbor. I read that a Christian man is a great man of love, one whose heart is

too full of kindness and generous feeling to allow of any hatred, one who even loves his enemies. But—you do not impress me as being such a man. Only the other day you were telling me of a certain person who had injured you and to whom you would not speak when you met him upon the street. You do not love your enemies. You are not a Christian." *Clayton Sedgwick Cooper,* in *Bible Study in the Work of Life.*

III God's Separated Men

How the Holy Spirit Separated Barnabas and Paul for the Work to which He had Called Them. The Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul. I wonder how they came to be so sure that thus the Spirit of God spake. I do not believe at all that it was a sudden prophetic utterance given to some one ecstatic believer. I believe that in the midst of this church's prayerful life there grew up a conviction that the Lord had been enlarging, training and equipping two of their fellow-laborers, and that the meaning of it was that the great harvest field was calling these two out of their midst. God had set the light of great enterprises in the eyes of these two men and was preparing for them. One of them had kept a secret word for long in his heart. "I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles." He knew that the time of its full revealing would come. The church interpreted it for him. It was by the sight of the great, mighty-faithed Barnabas, and the indomitable energy and courage of Paul among these Christians of Antioch, by the unspeakable conviction that there was that come to pass in these two which could not be cabined within the discussions of a local church meeting, that the irresistible missionary argument was brought to bear upon this church.

Now I cannot but feel that it is in this fashion that God speaks to the Church still concerning its too easily forgotten tasks. God is always putting forth his men. They arise with the call of God plainly upon them, the capacity for long visions shining in them. He finds them in a little Syrian community, nad lo! Paul and Barnabas are given to make great history. He moves in a Jesuit fraternity, and lo! Francis Xavier becomes pioneer of the cross. He is at work in little Christian communities, in Scotch hamlets and Welsh villages, and amid English factories and workshops, and now it is a Moffatt and a Livingstone, a Morrison or a MacKay, a Chalmers or a Griffith John that is thrust forth. God finds them, and when the live and loyal churches in the midst of which they have arisen look upon them with Spirit-opened eyes, they know that in their appearing the Spirit is speaking to the churches. From a *Sermon* by *Thomas Yates.*

Separated for Home. "Art thou confined to the family circle—tied by the duties of the household, forced to abide at home?" asks George Matheson. "Does that make you less a missionary than Paul was? Not so, my brother. God sent Paul out, but he sends thee in."

Separated for Welfare Work. "It's very noble in you, Elsie, to give so much of your time to that work among the tenement house children. I'm sure I admire you for it; but for my part I never had any call to that kind of work."

"Any call?" Elsie's eyes were gravely questioning.

"Yes, of course. I suppose you felt called to go into it, didn't you?"

"I don't know. I don't think I ever thought of it just that way. I saw the need of something that I had time and strength to do, that was all. But wouldn't that be call enough?"

Would it not indeed? What plainer call can there be than a need that we can meet? Let us find in "the duty that lies nearest" our present definite call, sure that when we are wanted for another work, that, too, will be shown us. Opportunity—that is God's clear call to us. *Young People.*

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

We are called Christians. Are we akin to our acknowledged Leader? Are we doing anything that would lead others to know that we are his followers? Does our own knowledge of our motives and our ruling choice bear witness within that we are Christians in reality?

Among the Swiss mountains there is a home for friendless children, over whose doorway these words are inscribed, "God has his Plan for Everyone".

It is easy to see that Barnabas and Paul were called of God for a great work, but there is no one so neglected, so worthless, but God has a plan for him, a part in the world's great work for him to do, and it rests with him to achieve it. His task is to make the very best possible out of the powers God has given him, and in the place and circumstances in which God has placed him. Why should any one lack courage when he recalls that he is working out God's plan for him?

Our Prayer. Christians, Christ's men, Christ-like—such, O Lord Jesus, may we be in deed and in truth. Help us who bear thy name to be worthy of it; to be so free from selfishness and pride and envy and malice and guile as to be Christians in spirit; to live so close to thee in thought and prayer as to be Christians in faith; and to be so active in thy service as to be Christians in work, God's separated men and women, boys and girls, doing the work whereto he has called us.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Paul's varied experience in preparation for his life's work. Acts 9.19-30; Gal. 1.15-24; II Cor. 11.32, 33.

2. Who is a Christian? What still needs to be done to make our community Christian? See the Second Topic; also Chapters I, II, and III of Revival Sermons, by Dr. Chapman; "Why not Try Christianity," *Outlook,* Dec. 9, 1914, p. 810.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. Into what Roman provinces was the peninsula of Asia Minor divided? 2. Find out what you can about Antioch. (*Guide,* p. 212.) 3. About Iconium. (*Guide,* p. 212.) 4. For what is Antioch of Syria remembered in Apostolic history? 5. For what is Antioch of Pisidia remembered? 6. Where had Paul been between his stay in Antioch of Syria and his arrival in Perga? What had happened? 7. To what disagreement later between Paul and Barnabas did John Mark's departure at Perga lead? (Acts 15. 36-40.) 8. What did Paul say about John Mark in his letter to Timothy? 9. What scene in Christ's life is recalled by Paul's reception in the synagogue? (Lk. 4.16-30.) 10. Was it customary to ask strangers to speak in the synagogue? (*Guide,* p. 210.) 11. What parts of the law and the prophets were probably read? (*Guide,* p. 210.) 12. Describe the arrangement in the synagogue. (*Guide,* p. 210.) 13. Read Paul's address, verses 17-41, and compare with it Peter's in chapter II and Stephen's in chapter VII. 14. Give an analysis of Paul's address. 15. On what two occasions did Jesus tell the apostles to preach first to the Jews? (Mt. 10.5, 6; Lk. 24.47.) 16. How do the words of Jesus in Jn. 5.39, 40 say that the Jews of his day judged themselves unworthy of eternal life? 17. How did Jesus say each one decides his own fate as recorded in Jn. 12.47, 48? 18. What bearing has Mt. 21.43 upon our lesson? 19. Where is the quotation in verse 47 found? (Footnote of Bible.) 20. Draw a map of the Eastern Mediterranean World and trace Paul's journey from Antioch of Syria to Antioch of Pisidia.

Questions to Think About. 1. Who was John Mark? 2. Why do you think he left just as the hard work was beginning? 3. Why did not Paul and Barnabas remain at Perga? (*Guide,* p. 212.) 4. What two sorts of hearers had Paul? 5. What made the Jews so jealous? 6. What did Paul mean by his exhortation recorded in verse 43? (*Guide,* p. 209.) 7. What is the meaning of "as many as were ordained to eternal life" verse 48? (*Guide,* p. 209.) 8. How may we judge ourselves unworthy of eternal life? (*Guide,* p. 214.) 9. Why were the women through whom the Jews worked called devout and honorable? 10. How did the opposition of the Jews affect Paul? 11. Who were the first foreign missionaries?

Note-Book Work. In your Life of Paul, write Chapter II: Paul Consecrated for Missionary Work.

Questions upon The Acts. 1. Why is the historical book of the New Testament called The Acts? 2. By whom was it written? 3. How did he gain a knowledge of the events he records? 4. What do we know about him? 5. When was The Acts written?

LESSON VII—MAY 14

"LO, WE TURN TO THE GENTILES"

Golden Text

I have set thee for a light of the Gentiles, That thou shouldest be for salvation unto the uttermost part of the earth. Acts 13.47

LESSON Acts 13.13-52: verses 13-15, 42-52 printed

MEMORIZE verses 45, 46

13 Now Paul and his company set sail from Paphos, and came to Perga in Pamphylia: and John departed from them and returned to Jerusalem. 14 But they, passing through from Perga, came to Antioch of Pisidia; and they went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down. 15 And after the reading of the law and the prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.

42 And as they went out, they besought that these words might be spoken to them the next sabbath. 43 Now when the synagogue broke up, many of the Jews and of the devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas; who, speaking to them, urged them to continue in the grace of God.

44 And the next sabbath almost the whole city was gathered together to hear the word of God. 45 But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with jealousy, and contradicted the things which were spoken by Paul, and blasphemed. 46 And Paul and Barnabas spake out boldly, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first be spoken to you. Seeing ye thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. 47 For so hath the Lord commanded us, *saying*,

I have set thee for a light of the Gentiles,

That thou shouldest be for salvation unto the uttermost part of the earth.

48 And as the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of God: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. 49 And the word of the Lord was spread abroad throughout all the region. 50 But the Jews urged on the devout women of honorable estate, and the chief men of the city, and stirred up a persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and cast them out of their borders. 51 But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium. 52 And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

I. From Cyprus to Pisidia, 13, 14.
II. In the Synagogue at Antioch, 15-43.
  1. Paul's Sermon, 15-41.
    a. God's Dealings with Israel until David, a Type of the Messiah, 16-22. (b) Jesus the Realization of the Messianic Hope, 23-37. (c) Salvation for All through the Messiah, 38-41.
  2. Impression made by Paul's Sermon, 42-43.
III. Jealousy of Jews, 44, 45.
IV. "Lo, we Turn to the Gentiles", 46-49.
V. Paul and Barnabas Driven from Antioch, but Disciples Remain Steadfast, 50-52.

13. *Now Paul and his company.* Note that "Barnabas and Saul", verses 2 and 7, have become "Paul and his company".—*Came to Perga in Pamphylia.* Paul was a native of Cilicia, and the southern part of Asia Minor must have been known to him.—*John departed from them and returned to Jerusalem.* See verse 5. Whether from fear of the dangers, or disapproval of Paul's methods, or lack of perseverance, or from one of many other reasons that have

been suggested, can not be known; we only know that his departure displeased Paul. Barnabas, who was his uncle, readily overlooked the fault. See Acts 15.37-40.

14. See the Geographical Background.

15. *After the reading of the law and the prophets.* See the Orientalisms. Usually the sermon was an exposition of some portion which had been read from the law or from the prophets. Dean Farrar thinks Paul followed the custom, because he notes the unusual use of two words in the brief report which we have of Paul's speech (v. 18, as a nurse-father, Dt. 1.32 and v. 17, exalted, employed in an unusual manner) and the fact that they are found respectively in the first of Deuteronomy and the first of Isaiah, together with the circumstance that the historical part of his sermon turns on the subject alluded to in the first of these chapters, and the promise of free remission of sins is directly suggested by the latter. Turning to the Jewish Lectionary which is of extreme antiquity, Dean Farrar finds that these very lessons were combined for the same Sabbath, and sees an almost convincing proof that those were the two lessons which had been read on that Sabbath Day in the synagogue of Antioch more than eighteen hundred years ago.—*The rulers of the synagogue.* See the Orientalisms.—*Sent unto them.* Paul and Barnabas were sitting with the congregation.—*Say on.* No chance visitors, about whom nothing was known, would have been thus called upon. Professor Ramsay concludes that either they took seats in some special place, thus showing that they desired to address the people, or that previously they had made known to these rulers their character and mission as teachers.

17-41. With Paul's sermon compare Peter's in Chapter II, and Stephen's in Chapter VII. The Jews never tired of hearing their own history. "Do not some of us occasionally say, 'Tell me the old, old story of Jesus and his love'?" questions Joseph Parker. "Therein we are partly Jewish—that is our story. As the Jews began from the formation of themselves as a people, we begin at Bethlehem, and in proportion as we are in the right spirit and temper, we are never tired of hearing it."

42. *And as they went out.* Paul and Barnabas.—*They besought.* The congregation.

43. *When the synagogue broke up.* When the congregation was dismissed. —*Devout proselytes.* God-fearing Gentiles. Their presence in the synagogue gives evidence of the kindly feeling existing between Jews and Gentiles here.—*Urged them to continue in the grace of God.* Keep yourselves in the love of God, Jude 21. "He asks them to hold fast the measure of faith they already have, and to expect further divine favor in answer to their steadfastness." Compare Barnabas's exhortation that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord, last lesson.

44. *Almost the whole city was gathered together to hear the word of God.* Such an effect from Paul's sermon on the preceding Sabbath shows that Paul was a most convincing speaker.

45. *Contradicted the things which were spoken by Paul.* They spoke against his gospel of universal salvation, on equal terms to Gentiles and Jews.—*Blasphemed.* Or, *railed,* RVm. They slandered the apostles.

46. *It was necessary that the word of God should first be spoken to you.* This was Christ's command, Acts 1.8; 3.26.—*Ye thrust it from you.* He came unto his own and they that were his own received him not, Jn. 1.11.—*Judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life.* See ¶ 2, p. 214. "We are daily judging ourselves unworthy of divine grace in every act of refusal to accept and rely on it. The most awful and the most splendid fact in human life to me is, that God puts the reins of my destiny in my own hands, and neither holds the reins before nor behind me" (*Lyman Abbott*).—*Lo, we turn to the Gentiles.* The response of the Gentiles here had convinced Paul that the door to them was open, and he sees that henceforth his mission will be chiefly to them.

47. *For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying.* The quotation is from Isa. 49.6, and there it is an assertion that Christ belongs also to the Gentiles. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his teacher, and the servant as his lord, Mt. 10.25.

48. *As many as were ordained to eternal life believed.* "This expresses the Pauline and Apostolic doctrine of predestination, according to which God de-

sires the salvation of all men (1 Tim. 2.4; 4.10), but inasmuch as he foresees that some (in the exercise of their free will) will actually repent and believe, while others will refuse to do so, he ordains the former to eternal life, and the latter to eternal death (Rom. 8.28-30)" (*Dummelow*).

50. *The Jews urged on the devout women of honorable estate, and the chief men of the city.* "There was a class which had not come to the synagogue. The Roman colonists, the local aristocracy, were not drawn so much to the synagogue. An address in Greek would not be so attractive to them, for Greek had not yet become their home language, as it did two centuries later. They had not the same affinity of spirit with the Semites as the older population had. An aristocracy is, as a rule, not so easily and quickly affected by missionary influence as the humbler classes are. This class held the reins of government: it was the privileged higher class. To it the Jews went for help, moving it through the women who belonged to it" (*Ramsay*). History records that women in Asia Minor enjoyed great consideration and often held office in the cities.

51. *They shook off the dust of their feet against them.* A symbolic act: see Mt. 10.14.

52. *The disciples were filled with joy.* In spite of the departure of their leaders, the disciples at Antioch of Pisidia remained true to their faith.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

14. *They went into the synagogue and sat down.* The synagogue was always a plain, rectangular building erected on the highest spot in the neighborhood, or having a tall pole on the roof to make it conspicuous. The chief seats were around the ark or chest at one end of the building, containing the sacred rolls. Before the ark hung a veil and lamps. In front was a platform with its reading desk or pulpit. In the congregation the men were separated from the women. During the prayers Paul and Barnabas stood with the rest with their faces toward Jerusalem.

15. *After the reading of the law and the prophets.* When synagogue worship began during the Babylonian captivity the law and certain psalms were the portions read. Dr. Tristram informs us that "During the time when the Jews were oppressed by Antiochus Epiphanes, before their deliverance by the Maccabees, the tyrant (163 B. C.) issued an edict forbidding the public reading of the law. They then substituted the prophets in its stead. After the recovery of their liberties, they still continued the reading of the prophets after the law. In the synagogues of the Samaritans the reading of the prophets has never been introduced." Seven portions of the law and three of the prophets were read. The Pentateuch was called "the Law"; "The Prophets" included the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the twelve minor prophets; the rest of the Old Testament writings were termed *Hagiographa.*

15. *The rulers of the synagogue sent unto them.* There was a "ruler" and an "attendant", but in no synagogue were there officials whose duty it was to read or speak. The ruler called whom he would to the platform for these services. The scribes, who were the copyists of the scriptures and the lawyers of the Jews, and the rabbis, the learned doctors of the law, were the ones who usually expounded the scriptures, though an Israelite of ability could perform this service. Paul was a Jewish rabbi, and probably wore some insignia that distinguished him as such. Compare the service in the synagogue at Nazareth when Christ was called on to speak, Luke 4.16-30. The ruler directed the attendant to request either Paul or Barnabas to speak to the people.

50. *The devout women of honorable estate.* The honors and influence which belonged to women in the cities of Asia Minor form one of the most remarkable features in the history of the country. In all periods the evidence runs on the same lines. On the border between fable and history we find the Amazons. The best authenticated cases of *mutterrecht* belong to Asia Minor. Under the Roman Empire we find women magistrates, presidents at games, and loaded with honors. The custom of the country influenced even the Jews, who in at least one case appointed a woman at Smyrna to the position of *Archi-synagogos* (ruler of the synagogue). It would be strange if the women had not exercised some influence over St. Paul's fortunes. *W. M. Ramsay,* in *The Church in the Roman Empire.*

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. Why did Paul and Barnabas go from Antioch in Syria to Jerusalem? Whom did they bring back with them from Jerusalem? What history did Peter recount when he addressed the people at Pentecost? What history did Stephen recall just before his death? Before whom had Jesus charged his followers first to be his witnesses?

Paul's First Missionary Journey: on the Island of Cyprus. After the establishment of a prosperous Christian Church at Antioch in Syria, Paul and Barnabas with John Mark as their attendant, left for the port of Seleucia, and there embarked for the island of Cyprus. They preached at Salamis, on the eastern end of the island, and then crossed to Paphos, on the western. There Elymas, a sorcerer and false prophet who sought to prevent the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, from accepting the Christian faith, was made blind, and Sergius Paulus believed. From Paphos Paul and his company set sail for Pamphylia, probably in the late summer of 46 A. D.

Paul's First Recorded Sermon. Paul's sermon was amazing because of the way in which he addressed the Gentiles. "Men of Israel, and ye that fear God", he began, addressing the Gentiles by the latter phrase. And he called the Gentiles "brethren", and coupled them with those of the race of Abraham—"Brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and those among you that fear God, to us is the word of this salvation sent forth". The theme of his sermon has well been called "God's greatest gift to us". He recalled the glories of Israel's past from Moses to

Roman Provinces and Districts in Asia Minor

David, recounting the goodness of God to them and noting especially his promise of a Savior; he told them that Jesus, who was announced by John as the Savior, had fulfilled the Old Testament Scriptures by his death and resurrection; and then he urged them to accept him, for in no other way could they

be saved. He closed with a prophecy of Habakkuk, bidding them beware lest in rejecting this salvation they call down upon themselves as severe a judgment as that inflicted by the Chaldean armies on the Jewish nation when it refused to heed Habakkuk's warning.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Study this map of the peninsula of Asia Minor. The name Asia Minor was not known in Paul's day, nor was there any name which included all the Roman provinces into which the peninsula was divided for administrative purposes. There were three provinces on the south, Lycia, Pamphylia and Cilicia; Asia was on the west, Bithynia and Pontus were on the north; Galatia and Cappadocia were in the center. The popular names of various sections were different, and it is these names which are occasionally used in the Acts.

Paul and his company sailed from Paphos on the west of the island of Cyprus northward to the province of Pamphylia. Perga, the capital, was several miles from the coast on the river Cestrus, which was then navigable. Paul did not tarry long here on this hot marshy plain. Professor Ramsay's theory is that he suffered an attack of malarial fever and was obliged to seek higher levels. He went northward a hundred miles and more, crossing the Taurus Mountains to Antioch of Pisidia, on the high central tableland. It was a hard journey toiling up the rugged mountain side through the narrow gorges, a journey full of perils of rivers and perils of robbers, 2 Cor. 11.26.

Pisidia was a district in the province of Galatia. Antioch of Pisidia was really a city of another district, Phrygia, which, however, bordered Pisidia; the official title therefore of Antioch was "Antioch near Pisidia, as if it existed for the sake of Pisidia." It was one of the sixteen Antiochs founded by Seleucus Nikator and named after his father Antiochus, Antioch of Syria being another of them. Do not confound the two Antiochs of Acts 13. Even a well-known minister writing in a religious weekly speaks of the recent excavations made at Antioch of Pisidia and then adds that the disciples were first called Christians here at Antioch! It was Antioch in Syria where the disciples were first called Christians: it was Antioch in Pisidia (Asia Minor) where Paul made his first public address that has come down to us, and where a door, wide and effectual, was opened to the Gentiles, not only of this city, but of all the world. Professor Ramsay, the noted archæologist, reports Antioch in Pisidia to be in almost the same condition as it was when Paul knew it, save for the ruin and decay of the ages, only a deep layer of earth covering the ancient city. At this writing he has partially uncovered the Forum, and has brought to light an inscription of great length recording the exploits of Augustus, which is engraven on the balustrade of the great staircase, sixty-six feet broad, which led to the Forum from the lower town. It is believed that the excavations here will throw light upon many questions in regard to the history of the Acts and Paul's epistles.

Coin of Antioch of Pisidia. Reclining Figure of River-God; Left Arm Resting on Urn from which Water Flows

Iconium was an important city on the border of the two districts of Galatia called Lycaonia and Phrygia. It was a very ancient city, as old as Damascus Professor Ramsay believes, and he records the legend that it was built before the flood and rebuilt immediately afterwards, and the Phrygian language was the primitive language of mankind. The king of Iconium at the flood was Nannakos; and in Greece they had the proverbial expression "older than Nannakos" which corresponds to our expression "before the flood", or antediluvian. From the end of the eleventh to the fourteenth century, A. D., Iconium, or Konia as it was then called and is at the present day, was the capital of the Seljukian Empire and had such splendid buildings that the proverb arose among the Turks, "See all the world; but see Konia". It is today a city of some sixty thousand, and being on the Bagdad Railroad is flourishing.

Coin of Iconium. Athena Polias, the Goddess of Iconium

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Paul knew his hearers. He began by rehearsing past history which the Jews never tired of hearing, but he ended by proclaiming that Jesus was the Christ, that through him is remission of sins. "Dr. Norman McLeod never came to my shop", said a blacksmith, "without talking to me as if he had been a blacksmith all his life; but he never went away without leaving Christ in my heart".

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Last week we had a lesson about the Gospel in Antioch. Where was this city? What led the disciples to go there? To whom did they preach? Why was Barnabas sent to them? Whom did he get to help him in the work? What name was given to the disciples here? What did they do for the disciples in Jerusalem?

To-day we have a lesson about events in another Antioch. Point it out on the map. Where had Paul been since his work in Antioch of Syria? Where did he go from Paphos? Point out Perga on the map. What mountains are between Perga and Antioch? It was a dangerous journey through narrow passes over these mountains. What city is about a hundred miles from here? How long does it take to go there by rail? It probably took Paul five days if nothing delayed him, to climb this same distance up over the Taurus Mountains to Antioch. In a letter which he afterwards wrote to the Corinthians he spoke of having been "in journeys often, in perils of rivers, in perils of robbers". These dangers were just the ones which he would meet on this journey from Perga to Antioch. The rivers here rush down through narrow ravines, and after a storm the danger from a sudden flood is very great. Then in the passes there were "castles of robbers", who watched for passing travelers to pounce upon, and were hidden in positions so inaccessible that even the Roman armies had not been able to exterminate them.

For Older Pupils. In the Scientific Institute of New York there is a remarkable diamond. For one hundred days this diamond had been under the revolutions of a grinding wheel revolved so rapidly that it had traversed in that time a distance equal to three times the distance around the globe, working under a weight of forty pounds instead of the usual two pounds, and yet no impression was made upon it. The lapidary was exhausted, but the diamond was uncut, still in the rough, and the jeweler sent it to the Institute as a curiosity.

Like this refractory diamond were the Jews of Christ's day and Paul's. One who reads the Gospels and the Book of the Acts continuously, paying heed to the pressure that was brought to bear on the Jews to accept Jesus as the Christ, and seeing them reject him again and again, must feel that the task was a hopeless one. This belief came to Paul at Antioch in Pisidia. Here he made his resolve that henceforth, though he would still offer the gospel to the Jews first in whatever city he went, his main effort should be for the Gentiles, the diamonds in the rough that would not resist the shaping hand of God.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Jealousy

Jealousy the Root of Other Evil Fruit. The Jews were jealous of Paul's success. They counted him a rival. It must have been a stormy scene when their hatred broke forth in contradictions and blaspheming. Jealousy unchecked has many other bitter evils in its train. In the words of Doctor Horace Bushnell, If you have a jealous temper, get the mastery of that, and all the bitter passions will skulk and disappear, anticipating their doom.

Jealousy Hurts Only Yourself. There is a fable of an eagle which could outfly another, and the other didn't like it. The latter saw a sportsman one day, and said to him: "I wish you would bring down that eagle". The sportsman replied that he would if he only had some feathers to put into the arrow. So the eagle pulled one out of his wing. The arrow was shot, but didn't quite reach the rival eagle; it was flying too high. The envious eagle pulled out more feathers, and kept pulling them out until he lost so many that he couldn't fly, and then the sportsman turned round and killed him. My friend, if you are jealous, the only man you can hurt is yourself. *D. L. Moody.*

Conquering a Jealous Rival. Jenny Lind and Grisi were rivals for popular favor in London. They were invited one night to sing at a court concert. Jenny Lind sang first, and so disturbed was she by the haughty, scornful look on Grisi's face that she was on the point of failure, when a happy inspiration came to her. Asking her accompanist to give her his seat at the piano, she let her fingers rove over the keys in a loving prelude, and then she sang a little prayer that she had loved as a child, but had not sung for years. As she sang she forgot all about the presence of royalty and the hostility of her jealous rival, and was once more in her home singing to loving friends. The soft, plaintive notes swelled louder and richer; she threw her whole soul into the song, till it died away in a sob. In admiring wonder her audience sat spell-bound, but Grisi, her haughty expression gone and a tear glistening in her long black lashes, crossed to Jenny Lind's side and with all the impulsiveness of a child of the tropics threw her arms about her, and kissed her.

II Self-Sentenced

A Savor of Life unto Life or of Death unto Death. Paul told the Jews at Antioch that they had condemned themselves. It was not his fault; it was not God's fault. The word of God had been spoken to them, but they would not accept it. They thrust it from them, and in so doing passed sentence on themselves, judging themselves unworthy of eternal life. "Ye search the scriptures, because ye think that in them ye have eternal life", said Jesus once to the Jews of Capernaum; this is what the Jews of Antioch did. "And these are they which bear witness of me"; he continued. This the Jews of Antioch would not believe. "And ye will not come to me, that ye may have life", sorrowfully added the Giver of eternal life; this was the sin of the Jews of Antioch, the sin by which they judged themselves unworthy of that life, judicially decided themselves unworthy, these men who thought that they alone of all the nations were worthy.

It was the same word of God that was preached to the Gentiles, and they accepted it gladly; by their faith they judged themselves worthy of eternal life. The two expressions, "unworthy of eternal life" and "ordained to eternal life", as Dr. Maclaren points out, are negative and positive sides of the same thought.

"The testimony of the apostles was 'a savor of life unto life or of death unto death'" comments St. Augustine. "The same fire reddens the gold and burns the dross: under the same threshing-sledge the grain is cleaned and the chaff is crushed out; by the same press-beam the oil is separated from the dregs."

The Passing of the Opportunity. Picture to yourself what would happen to the bird if it missed the appointed hour of its migration. Yonder soars the winged army, and the air is full of imperious call and summons. It wheels and lingers in the sunset, but this one foolish creature still hangs back. Then at last the great host begins to move southwards, and silence falls upon empty fields. The sun shines next day, but with diminished beam, and this foolish creature is not afraid. And then some night the autumn storm bursts upon the reaped fields, and after that comes the frost, and then the deep snow, and the shepherd on the hills finds in the snow a little dead bird, starved and frozen; it has missed the hour of its migration.

Can we doubt that that is also a picture of things in human life? Can we hide from ourselves the truth that in the same way men do miss the seasons of God's grace? Is it not possible to resist the Spirit, to repulse the heavenly Prompter, to dismiss the warning impulse?

I can not imagine any man, translated into the realm of the eternities, whose very conception implies limitlessness, quite coming to his last chance; nor can you pierce the hereafter to know where that last chance is set, even if there be such an awful hour of finality. But this I know, that here, and within the limits of this world, we do see men miss their last chances. We do see them refuse the grace of God, and count themselves unworthy of eternal life.

Don't wait, don't doubt, don't linger. Observe the season, and settle things with God now. And I plead with you to do this lest for you the hour should come (which God forbid) when you will wake from your dream of folly to utter this bitterest of all cries: "Behold, the harvest is past, the summer is ended, and I am not saved." *W. J. Dawson,* in *The Evangelistic Note.*

How Jesus Said Each One Decides his Own Fate. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God sent not his Son into the world to judge the world; but that the world should be saved through him. He that believeth not hath been judged already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their works were evil.... And if any man hear my sayings, and keep them not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my sayings, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I spake, the same shall judge him in the last day. Jn. 3.16-19; 12.47, 48.

III I Have Set Thee for a Light to the Gentiles

Apart from Christ, there is No Light in Us. Unless we receive light from him, it is impossible for us to shine. I was once told that diamonds would shine in the dark; and I wondered if it were true. So one day I went to a diamond merchant and asked him if it were true. "You shall see for yourself," he said, and he took me down into a huge iron safe in the basement and closed the door, so as to shut out even the faintest ray of light. It was like midnight. Then he pulled out a drawer and said: "I have in my hands a tray of beautiful diamonds; can you see any of them sparkling?" I replied that I could not. Then he lighted the gas, turning it down very low indeed. Ah, what a difference! The tray seemed full of sparks; and when the gas was turned up higher, the brilliancy of the diamonds was quite startling. Even so, of ourselves it is impossible to shine in the dark. Apart from the Lord Jesus Christ there is no light in us; we must let him shine into us, that we may reflect the light we receive from him. *The Christian.*

Thou Shouldest Be for Salvation unto the Uttermost Part of the Earth. Take a man with the taste for drink and for wandering fixed upon him as a habit, a man who can do a bit of a job here and a bit of a job there, a man who is always roving about, getting drunk, and put in jail, getting in want and being helped out by some charitable institution. Would it be any good for such a man to become a Christian? Of course it would; thousands of such men have become Christians and subsequently decent citizens and respectable people. And, on the other hand, take some person in a wholly heathen land, someone who has no notion that there is such a thing as the gospel of Jesus, perhaps, some fierce savage of Central Africa, perhaps some well educated child in China.

There you have the contrast. Other things being equal, supposing it were the last chance and you the last preacher, which ought you to preach to? Ought you to bring the gospel to the man who has had it offered him every day of his life for fifty years, or to the one who does not so much as know that there is a gospel? Paul made his decision very definitely. "Lo", said he, "we turn to the Gentiles". It was very fortunate for us here in America that he did so.

Of course we do not have the sharp alternative offered to us that the lesson presents. The church to-day can preach at home and abroad too. But we shall do well to remember this lesson when we have to decide which is the more important. We ought to remember that when two things are good, it may be that one is more important than the other. The fact that one thing offers itself to our notice more forcibly than another does not prove that it is really more important. We are not to suppose that no one of those Jews in Antioch in Pisidia was ever converted to Christianity. Doubtless many were. But Paul and Barnabas saw that their work did not lie with them but with the Gentiles. *Professor E. E. Hale,* in *Adult Bible Class Monthly.*

Christianity is for All. One of the first converts of Neesima in Japan was an influential citizen of a suburb of Kioto. When it became known he was at once summoned to appear before the Kioto magistrates. In the course of the conversation, one of the officials said: "We have good and sufficient religion here in Japan; we do not want any more. We have Confucianism for scholars like you, and Buddhism for the masses."

To this Neesima replied: "If Confucianism is an all-sufficient religion, why

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is it, since the founder lived thousands of years before Christ and taught during a long life, that it has not spread beyond China and Japan? And if Buddhism is an all-sufficient religion, how is it, started by Buddha thousands of years before Christ, and taught by him through a long life, that it has not spread beyond India, China and Japan? And if Christianity is a bad religion, how is it since its Founder only taught three years, and was put to death when he was thirty-three years old, that it has spread all over Europe and America, and is spreading all over Africa and Asia and all the islands of the sea?"

This story is quoted in "Missionary Comments" prepared for the Young People's Missionary Movement, and these words are added: "When Jesus is received into the heart, he is as much at home in the cities by the Indus and the Nile as in those by the Hudson and the Clyde. We can not think of a Western Mohammed. We can hardly think of a Western Buddha, but you discover nothing local or provincial about Jesus Christ. It makes not the least difference where men may preach his gospel; to the most cultured Europeans or the most barbarous Africans, to the thoughtful Hindus or to the North American savages, among the naked Hottentots or among the fur-clad Esquimaux; he finds a true home in the hearts of all who receive him, because he is the universal Man, and even the three hundred names given him in the Scriptures do not exhaust his million-sided personality".

The Forward Movement. Of Napoleon it has been said that "he never for a moment lost sight of his way onward in the dazzle and uproar of present circumstances". How perfectly this remark befits Paul all our lessons will show, and we shall see more often the "uproar" than the "dazzle", the opposition rather than the glory, but never once shall we see Paul losing sight of his goal. The Jews of Antioch will not hear him; he will turn them, to the Gentiles. He will go on and on, till he has made Christ known throughout the Roman Empire, ceasing not in his forward movement till death itself arrests him.

At this writing the terrible European War is in progress. "What shall we do"? questions Dr. J. H. Jowett. "Is it the hour for craven fear, or for a noble courage? Shall we cry 'forward' or shall we sound the depressing and despairing note of retreat?" And then he counsels us to keep our eyes fixed upon the object for which Christ died—"to let all men know that all men move under a canopy of love as broad as the blue sky above, to break down all middle walls of partition, and to merge the sundered peoples in the quickening communion of his grace. In all the shock and convulsions of today we must keep that object steadfastly in sight. Today carnal strength is stalking in deadly stride through a whole continent, and the church must do something so splendid and so heroic as will outshine the glamor of material war. We must show that the conquering glories of the spirit are far more arresting than the bloody struggles and conquests of the flesh. I verily believe that if the apostle Paul were in our midst today, with the war raging in Europe, he would sound an advance all along the line. He would call us in this hour, when men are being summoned to kill and to destroy, to send out more men and women to save, and to comfort and to heal—men and women who will lay down their lives in bringing life to their fellow-men. The leaders of our army tell us that if we are to hold the field and seize the opportunities of the present hour, we must make an increase of sixty per cent. in all the giving throughout the church. There are churches in New York which have joyfully given the increase. I appeal to the members of his church to be good soldiers of Jesus Christ, every one of us, and to answer the call as individually hearing the great Captain of our salvation, and to do it in the spirit of love and sacrifice."

How Children Helped to Spread the Light. A fourteen-year-old lad was working in an iron mine in Nova Scotia when an explosion of blasting powder occurred. He was picked up torn and bleeding, his eyesight gone, and his legs broken. One day his pastor read him a letter which he had received from a missionary telling how much a missionary vessel was needed to ply between Sydney, Australia, and the lonely mission fields on the South Sea Islands. "Why don't they build it"? asked the poor sufferer. "There is no money", was the answer. The next time the pastor came to see him, the lad was eager to tell about a plan he had thought of to raise money for the ship. "There are twenty thousand Sunday-school children in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Cape Breton, and Prince Edward Island", he said, "and if every scholar had a collection card,

enough money could be raised to build it". The plan was referred to the Board of Missions and approved, and at the end of a year sums ranging from five cents to one or two dollars had been sent in sufficient number to pay for the "Dayspring", the first one of the many "missionary ships" in the southern seas. You will be glad to know that a wonderful operation restored the sight of this boy, and when the boat was launched he was able to join in the singing and cheering of the thousands of children who watched it glide into the sea.

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

"Every man imputeth himself", says Tennyson. It is a startling thought that by our attitude toward Jesus the Christ we reveal our worthiness or unworthiness of eternal life. After a battle with Pompey in which so many thousands lost their lives, Cæsar stood on the battlefield and sadly exclaimed, "Alas! he would have it so". If ours is the way of death instead of the way of life, it is because we would have it so.

"God took the Jewish candle out of the candle-stick because it would not be the light of the world, and the nation went into darkness", said Dr. Babcock. "It was for the same reason that the Church went into the dark ages—it turned its candle into a dark lantern, and said, 'As long as I may see the light I do not care who is in the dark'." Is our church in any way like the Jewish candle?

Our Prayer. Lead our thoughts, O God, in the line of duty, not of reputation, and then there will be in our hearts no base feeling of jealousy of those who excel us. For all the peoples of the earth we pray, and especially for those people to whom we are a light, to whom we are sending thy missionaries that they may teach them to know thee and love thee and serve thee.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The responsibility of unbelief. See the Second Topic.
2. The responsibility of the church for the Forward Movement.
3. The Epistle to the Galatians, believed by many scholars to have been written by Paul to these first Gentile converts in Antioch of Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. What native of Lystra afterwards became a coworker and close friend of Paul's? (Acts 16.1.) 2. What Grecian legend of Phrygia expresses the belief that the gods came down in the likeness of men? (*Guide,* p. 223.) 3. Who was Jupiter, and what were his characteristics? 4. Who was Mercury, and what were his characteristics? 5. What reasons are given for attaching the name of Jupiter to Barnabas and of Mercury to Paul? (*Guide,* p. 220.) 6. How were the Roman emperors deified? (*Guide,* p. 220.) 7. What was the motive of the Jews who turned the people of Lystra against Paul? (Acts 13.45.) 8. What does Paul say about his experience at Lystra in 2 Cor. 11.25 and 2 Tim. 3.11? 9. What reasons for tribulation are given in Rom. 5.3-5 and Heb. 12.11? 10. On your map continue Paul's course to Derbe.

Questions to Think About. 1. How could Paul see that the cripple had faith to be made whole? 2. Compare the healing of the cripple of Lystra with that of the cripple at the Beautiful Gate. Why did the apostles tear their garments? 4. Why is Paul's rebuke of the people of Lystra so different from his stern rebuke of Elymas? 5. To what does "These vain things" refer? 6. In what words does Paul speak of God as Creator? 7. How does he refer to God's long-suffering? 8. What does he say about his providence. 9. How did the people of Lystra show themselves faithful to the limited light they had? 10. Had Paul and Barnabas been willing to receive their homage, would the people have been willing to listen to their message. 11. Why, then, was it not right to do evil that good might come? 12. What parallel to the fickleness of the people at Lystra in the life of Jesus? 13. The lesson shows how Paul and Barnabas had the true missionary spirit: what is it?

Memory and Note-Book Work. Memorize verses 15 (We bring you)-17. Write Chapter III, Paul at Antioch of Pisidia. Draw an outline map of the Mediterranean World, and on it trace Paul's journey from Antioch in Syria to Iconium.

LESSON VIII—MAY 21

THE CRIPPLE OF LYSTRA

Golden Text

He giveth power to the faint; and to him that hath no might he increaseth strength. Isaiah 40.29

LESSON Acts 14: verses 8-20 printed

MEMORIZE verses 8-10

8 And at Lystra there sat a certain man, impotent in his feet, a cripple from his mother's womb, who never had walked. 9 The same heard Paul speaking; who, fastening his eyes upon him, and seeing that he had faith to be made whole. 10 said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped up and walked. 11 And when the multitude saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voice, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men. 12 And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercury, because he was the chief speaker. 13 And the priest of Jupiter whose *temple* was before the city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the multitudes. 14 But when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of it, they rent their garments, and sprang forth among the multitude, crying out 15 and saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and bring you good tidings, that ye should turn from these vain things unto a living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that in them is: 16 who in the generations gone by suffered all the nations to walk in their own ways. 17 And yet he left not himself without witness, in that he did good and gave you from heaven rains and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts with food and gladness. 18 And with these sayings scarce restrained they the multitudes from doing sacrifice unto them.

But there came Jews thither from Antioch and Iconium: and having persuaded the multitudes, they stoned Paul, and dragged him out of the city, supposing that he was dead. 20 But as the disciples stood round about him, he rose up, and entered into the city: and on the morrow he went forth with Barnabas to Derbe.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

I. Restoration, 8-10.
II. Adoration, 11-13.
III. Admonition, 14-18.
IV. Persecution, 19.
V. Resolution, 20.

8. *At Lystra there sat a certain man.* Perhaps, like the cripple of Acts 3.2, he sat begging in his usual place on the streets.

9. *Seeing that he had faith to be made whole.* He noticed his eager attention. Compare Jesus' words, Thy faith hath made thee whole, Mt. 9.22.

10. *Stand upright on thy feet.* Just what he had not been able hitherto to do; compare Jesus' words to the man with the palsied arm, "Stretch forth thy hand".

11. *Saying in the speech of Lycaonia.* Greek was the universal language of the Roman Empire at this time. "In their excitement they abandon the less familiar Greek in which they had hitherto been conversing, and give vent to their feelings by shouting in their native tongues, as I have often witnessed a Welsh crowd break forth into the vernacular under the stress of similar circumstances" (*Maurice Jones*). Paul had spoken in Greek, and not understanding the Lycaonian dialect he and Barnabas evidently now returned to their abiding place.—*The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men.* "What they said was true in a sense. God had come down in the likeness of men in

Jesus Christ. Christ had returned to heaven, having accomplished his work on earth, but now he lived again in the lives of these missionaries who had come to tell the people of God's love and mercy" (*Miller*).

12. See Light from Oriental Life.

13. *Unto the gates.* It has been questioned whether these gates were the gates of the temple of Jupiter, of the city, or of the house where Paul was staying. Against the last supposition is the fact that the Greek word πυλῶνας is in the plural and, as Mr. Rackham says, the apostles would hardly have been lodging in a house of more than one *pylon,* nor could a sacrifice be easily offered in the narrow streets of an eastern city. "It will simplify matters very much," he says, "if we suppose that the lame man had been at the gate of the temple of Jupiter, and that the crowds were assembled there on the occasion of some great religious festival. The priests would then have been on the spot, and the bulls and garlands all ready. Instead of sacrificing within the area as usual, the priests brought them to the gates, the scene of the miracle, where the crowds were still collected."

14. *They rent their garments.* In token of their horror at the sacrilege. See Light from Oriental Life.

15. *Sirs, why do ye these things?* The people erred from ignorance, not wilfulness, and Paul speaks in sorrow rather than in anger. *By these things,* he referred to these religious rites which they were about to offer.—*Of like passions.* Of similar natures.—*These vain things.* These useless acts of adoration. *Who make....is.* These words speak of God's power as Creator.

16. *The nations. The Gentiles,* RVm. See Acts 17.30; Rom. 2.14, 15. In this verse Paul refers to God's forbearance, long-suffering.

17. *Left not himself without witness.* They had not been wholly without knowledge of God, for his gifts had borne witness to him. Here Paul refers to God's merciful providence. "Two things, at least, may be noticed in St. Paul's address at Lystra", observes Dr. R. I. Knowling. "There was nothing in it distinctively Christian: it might have been spoken by a pious Jew; and yet the very absence of Christian phraseology witnesses to the truthful report of the speech, as also to the tact of St. Paul. This 'natural religion' of the address at Lystra and its appeal to the material benefits of life would be likely to influence men who were dependent on rain and fruitful seasons. Or it may be that the apostle's purpose was merely to check an act of idolatry on the part of the inhabitants, rather than to preach a Gospel; or the speech may have been interrupted before the Christian application was enforced. But in any case it is difficult to believe that any one who was concocting a speech for the apostle would have made it void of any Christian reference whatever. At the same time, the whole narrative shows us in the plainest manner that St. Paul, in his preaching to the inhabitants of Lystra, proclaimed something far higher than a creed of natural theology."

19. *There came Jews thither from Antioch and Iconium.* It was a journey of one hundred and seventy-five miles from Antioch and of one hundred miles from Iconium.—*Having persuaded the multitudes.* Provoked with themselves, no doubt, for having made a mistake and offered undue honors to Paul, they were easily persuaded to turn against him by the hostile Jews.—*They stoned Paul.* Read 2 Tim. 3.11. "To-day, Hosanna; to-morrow, Crucify him: to-day, sacrificed to; tomorrow, sacrificed" (*Matthew Henry*).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

11. *The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men.* The Egyptians and Greeks believed that the gods often assumed human bodies and visited the earth to reward the good and punish the evil. The books of Homer, Vergil, and Ovid record many such visits. Cowper thus translates a passage from Homer:

> For, in similitude of strangers, oft,
> The gods, who can with ease all shapes assume,
> Repair to populous cities, where they mark
> Th' outrageous, and the righteous deeds of men.

12. *They called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercury.* Jupiter was their chief god, and Mercury was the messenger of the gods. Jupiter is represented

as old, large, and majestic; Barnabas may have been called Jupiter because he was the older man of the two, as Chrysostom conjectured, and more imposing in appearance. Mercury is represented as young and active and eloquent; Paul was called Mercury "because he was the chief speaker". This is the usual explanation of the fact that Paul was not called Jupiter, but Professor Ramsay gives a better explanation in his "Cities of St. Paul". The same qualities which mark out Paul to us as the leader, marked him out to the populace of Lycaonia as the agent and subordinate. The western mind regards the leader as the active and energetic partner; but the Oriental mind considers the leader to be the person who sits still and does nothing, while his subordinates speak and work for him. Hence in the truly oriental religions the chief god sits apart from the world, communicating with it through his messenger and subordinate; the more statuesque figure of Barnabas was therefore taken by the orientals as the chief god, and the active orator, Paul, as his messenger, communicating his wishes to men.

Jupiter and Mercury as Represented on an Ancient Altar. Jupiter Holds a Scepter and Thunderbolt; Mercury a Staff and a Bag, the Emblem of Commerce

While traveling in Asia Minor a year or two ago, Professor Ramsay found in a wall of a half-built house at Baluklaou—about a day's ride southward from Lystra—an ancient stone bearing a Greek inscription which shows that a statue of Hermes (Mercury) had been erected in a temple of Zeus (Jupiter), thus giving evidence that the people were familiar with the association of these two gods. Moreover, it is interesting to learn that the men who erected the tablet bore native Lycaonian names.

13. *Would have done sacrifice.* The Roman Empire deified and worshipped its emperors. In 29 A. D. Augustus Cæsar allowed the diets of the provinces of Asia and Bithynia to erect temples and show divine honor to him. Soon all the chief cities had their Cæsareum and their emperor's festival. In the time of Tiberius one of the reasons given for depriving the city of Cyziars in Asia of its position as a free city was that it had failed to erect a temple to the god Augustus. When Caligula became emperor in 37 A. D. the Romans inscribed his name on a shield of gold and appointed a day on which priests and senators, and their noblest young men and maidens should annually carry it to the Capitol with pæans and prayers. Caligula ordered the statues of the gods replaced by statues of himself, and in the temple dedicated to him he placed a golden image of himself which by his orders was robed each day in garments similar to those he himself wore. Before this image the people fell down and worshipped.

Herod Agrippa of Judea desired to receive divine honors like the Roman emperors. Josephus says of him: "Now, when Agrippa had reigned three years over all Judea, he came to the city Cæsarea, and there he exhibited shows in honor of Cæsar, upon his being informed that there was a certain festival celebrated to make vows for his safety. At which festival a great multitude was gotten together of the principal persons and such as were of dignity through his province. On the second day of the shows, he put on a garment of silver tissue, and of a texture truly wonderful, and came into the theatre, early in the morning. The silver of his garment, being illuminated by the fresh reflection of the sun's rays upon it, shone out after a surprising manner, and was so resplendent as to spread a horror over those that looked intently upon him. Presently his flatterers cried out, one from one place, and another from another (though not for his good), that he was a god, and they added, 'Be thou merciful to us, for although we have hitherto reverenced thee only as a man, yet shall we henceforth own thee as superior to mortal nature'. Upon this the King did neither rebuke them nor reject their impious flattery."

This is the Herod who sought to have his statue placed in the Holy of Holies

of the temple at Jerusalem, and to whom, as you know, the people one day shouted as he sat on his throne, "the voice of a god and not of a man", and immediately an angel of the Lord smote him (Acts 12.23).

14. *They rent their garments.* It was the custom among the Jews to express their grief or horror or anger by tearing their outer robe from the neck down towards the girdle.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. Under what circumstances did Peter restore a cripple to strength? What other miracles have our lessons recorded? To whom did Peter once say, "I also am a man"? Why did he say it? How did the people address Herod Agrippa just before his death? What turned the Jews of Antioch against Paul? What did they do to Paul? What made Paul leave Iconium?

Driven from Iconium. At Antioch of Pisidia a great crisis occurred in Paul's missionary labors. There he was led to see, and openly to proclaim, that his special mission was to the Gentiles. After a period of successful work, a riot ensued and he was expelled from the city. When he reached Iconium he spoke first in the Jewish synagogue, as was always his custom, and many, both of the Jews and the Gentiles, believed his message. Through the efforts of the hostile Jews the city was divided, part of the people believing the Jews and part the evangelists. Learning that Gentiles and Jews and Roman rulers had combined against them and were purposing to accomplish their deaths by stoning, they fled to Lystra and there preached the gospel.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Antioch and Iconium (last lesson) were in "Phrygian Galatia"; Lystra and Derbe, in "Lycaonian Galatia", Galatia being the name of the great Roman province which extended from north to south across the great central plateau of Asia Minor, and Phrygia and Lycaonia being the popular names of the southern districts of this province.

Lystra was a small Lycaonian town and Ramsay points out the fact that it is the only city of Asia Minor in which a native language is mentioned: here, alone, the native religion is confronted with the new faith; everywhere else Paul's address was directed to the classes which had shared to some degree in Greek education and were familiar with the Greek tongue. As there is no evidence of any synagogue in Lystra, Paul probably preached in the market-place or on the streets.

Coin of Lystra. The Founder Tracing the Limits of the New City with a Plough

Derbe lay isolated on the south-eastern edge of the Lycaonian plain. Lycaonia means the Land of Wolves; the plain was wild and dreary. The lofty, conical peak of the Taurus Mountains, eight thousand feet in height and snow-clad until after the end of June, which keeps guard above the city on the south, is today called Hadji-Baba, "Pilgrim Father". Professor Ramsay thinks it possible that this is a reminiscence of the travels of Paul, the Turkish name being a translation of a Pauline name attached to the mountain in the Christian time.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Dr. J. R. Miller, writing upon this lesson, observed that when we are doing Christ's work, helping and blessing others in his name; when people love us and express their gratitude for the good they have received at our hands; we are in danger of forgetting that the honor does not belong to us but to Christ, and that if we take it as our own and do not point the grateful people to our Master, we are accepting that which ought to be laid at his feet only. It is always easier to get people to love us and thank us, than to love and thank Christ. We should most jealously guard the honor of our Lord and turn every thought and all gratitude and trust toward him, seeking to be nothing, that he may be all in all.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger and Older Pupils. In his book entitled "In the Footsteps of St. Paul", Dr. Francis E. Clarke has an interesting account of a journey from Iconium, where we left Paul last week, to Lystra, where we find him to-day. "On reaching Khatun Serai, the modern Lystra, we found the inhabitants still less hospitable than in Paul's time", Dr. Clark writes. "Doubtless, a stranger in these days is a far greater rarity than in ancient times. Prying faces were thrust behind the curtains of our arabas (wagons) to look at the strange women from America, with their unveiled faces. The mudir, or head man, of the hamlet was among the first arrivals in the motley throng that surrounded the arabas. In return to a polite request that he would direct us to the ruins of the ancient city, he gave a prompt and curt refusal. The boys and young men, taking their cue from the head man, began to revile us as "Giaours" or "Christian dogs". But soon they found out that one of our company was a missionary doctor; then their whole attitude changed, for there were many diseased people in the little village, and to them the coming of a skilled physician from America, whose fame had already spread to this little hamlet, gave promise of health and life. This sudden change, gratifying as it was to the cold and weary travelers, showed them that the character of the Lystrians for fickleness had not changed with the changing centuries."

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I He Giveth Power

The Language of the Universe. To the cripple who had faith to be made whole, Paul said "Stand upright on thy feet". And he leaped up and walked. In several versions, either in the text or in the margin, Paul is made to say, "I say unto thee, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, stand upright on thy feet". Whether or not these words belong here, they certainly formed part of Paul's thought. The strength that came to those crippled limbs was not Paul's gift. Our Golden Text from Isaiah tells the source:—He giveth power to the faint, and to him that hath no might he increaseth strength.

"This is the language of the sunbeam, as it pierces the intercepting cloud and gladdens the earth with its smile", writes Joseph Parker; "this is the language of the flower, as it opens its mild eye in the morning of spring; this is the language of the moral Lazaruses, as they rise from their tombs and lay aside their cerements; and this is the language of the angelic hosts, as they spread their pinions to pursue their appointed mission! In short, this is the language of the universe; we can touch no atom which is destitute of the inscription, 'He giveth power'."

Our Sufficiency is of God. In a long story by Mabel Earle, published in "Forward", two young men were in a pumping-station, watching the revolution of the great wheels. James gazed at the enormous diameter of the wheels, their slow-gleaming spokes and vast, polished rims, and exclaimed, "Say, but they make a fellow feel small! They's so—so sufficient".

Austin laughed, but he admitted to himself that the adjective fitted. A sentence flashed into his brain as he listened to the vibrating chant: "Our sufficiency is of God! It was true. The tremendous power made visible before him here was simply a portion of God's power. Man could touch it and claim it by obedience to the laws under which it operated. Back of the unwearying wheels and the undiminishing water supply lay the infinite resources of the universe; beyond them, higher and deeper than human thought, the power of God.

"Jimmie's right", he mused. "It does make a fellow feel small. And yet—It's the only way anything great and good ever gets done. That same Power, working. It's working there in iron and steel, because somebody has obeyed the law, and claimed it. It works in big thoughts and brave actions and splendid kindnesses just that same way—because the heroes and martyrs and philanthropists obey the law and make way for the strength of God to act itself out in them. Oh, it makes a fellow feel smaller, and greater, and humbler, and prouder, than anything else in the world!"

The thoughts went deeper and deeper, into a region away beyond words. It was dawning on the boy's perception that his own strength of soul and body, the

vigor of muscle and clearness of brain which made life a joy and work a delight, were gifts from the inexhaustible source of all power. They, too, operated under a law which might be disregarded only at the cost of what was best in life; their integrity, for this world and the next, was a sacred thing.

On the way home a string of freight cars blocked the crossing. Jimmie scrambled to the top of one of them, but before he could slide down on the other side the freight engine backed to couple with the string of box cars, and he was thrown to the ground, with head and shoulders across the second track down which the Limited Express was thundering. There was no time to think or cry out or pray. Austin saw him fall; saw him lying motionless across the rail. The only way he could reach the boy was by darting under the box car, between the wheels already in motion. The thing would have been all but impossible for a trained athlete, or a railroad man accustomed to dodging the perils of the switching yard. Austin had no faintest idea that he could succeed; but a force stronger than his will leaped up in him—and the impossible had come to pass.

It was all over in less than a second. He had dashed forward between the wheels, snatched Jimmie from the rail and leaped with him to the other side of the track, dropping to the ground with a wrenched shoulder as the limited thundered past. Presently, after a dazed interval of pain, somewhat sharper pain under a surgeon's hands, swathed in bandages at last, riding homeward beside a vociferously repentant Jimmie, Austin came to himself enough to realize fully what were the words which had been drifting disjointedly in his mind since the moment when he saw Jimmie's danger.

"Our sufficiency is of God! I knew I couldn't do it. The thing wasn't possible. Nobody could do it. But something in me said that, and it was all over; it had been done. If one obeys the law of it then the Power is there; the impossible things are possible. Our sufficiency—is of God."

II Mistaken for a God

A Legend with which the People of Lystra were Familiar. The old Romans, you know, had many gods, and believed that they sometimes came to earth in disguise. Perhaps you have read at school of their beautiful legend of Baucis and Philemon, who received Jupiter and Mercury so hospitably when they came to Phrygia.

> For harbor at a thousand doors they knocked,
> Not one of all the thousand but was locked;
> At last one hospitable house they found,
> A homely shed; the roof, not far from ground,

as a great Latin poet named Ovid says of this visit of Jupiter and Mercury. Then he describes the way in which two poor people who lived in that "homely shed" did everything in their power to make the two gods comfortable, although they did not know who their guests were; how they were rewarded by having their poor little cottage changed into a magnificent temple; and how they replied, when asked what was their wish—

> We crave to serve before your sacred shrine,
> And offer at your altars rites divine,

and then added another wish, that they might die together. Thus it came to pass, according to the legend, that

> In Phrygian ground
> Two neighboring trees, with walls encompassed round,
> Stand on a moderate rise, with wonder shown,
> One a hard oak, a softer linden one;—

the two trees into which Baucis and Philemon were transformed at the same moment when "their race was run".

This story must have been often repeated to the children at Lystra, and there must have been many a child among them to whom these names were given and to whom their parents hoped these gods would sometime come. Was it any wonder that when Paul and Barnabas came to Lystra and healed a cripple that the people at once thought they must be these gods?

An African God. Benjamin Cobbe was a missionary who gave his life

for the black people of Lubaland. Years afterward Mr. Dan Crawford was traveling in Lubaland and met a negro who had promoted Mr. Cobbe to the literal rank of a "god". In his customary picturesque language, Mr. Crawford tells about it.

After a few exploring remarks, I ferreted out from the sealed sanctuary of his black breast a little private scheme of salvation he had concocted for his own particular benefit. And thus, even thus, did the uncanny thing run. Yes, he had known Mr. Cobbe in the old days—fragrant and holy in word and deed. The memory of the heavenly things he saw in this saint never left that negro, and away he went back to Lubaland with "the living epistle" graven on his mind.

"Look up, for we are going up—and Oh, how soon!" was a fond phrase of Cobbe's, so this negro thought much and long, and knew that the saint had really gone to God. *That* thing could not be killed by fever. He had only died into glory as the stairs die at sunrise. Hence the daring idea of this poor benighted soul to evolve a private religion of his own with Dr. Cobbe as central "savior". "Ah"! said the negro, "when I am in a fix in life this is what I do, I just send up a prayer to Bwanna Cobbe as mediator, and he will arrange it, for he has a big say with God".

Of course, I righted his wrong theology. Of course, I deplored and implored that this was the unkindest cut of all—that this was stabbing him, not kissing him. But oh! the bitter-sweet reflection notwithstanding—this, that a mere man should be chosen as a daysman beween God and his soul. "A living epistle" —a walking and talking Bible. They saw—may I dare the phrase?—the gleam of the life eternal shooting out of his honest hazel eyes; they saw, I say, and they believed in a man of God. How much more will they believe in the Man in the Glory, the Man who is Jehovah's Fellow?

III God Leaves Himself not without Witnesses among the Heathen

There is a Divine Power that Gives Rains and Fruitful Seasons. At the point where Cappadocia and Lycaonia meet, beneath the great wall of Taurus, there flows forth from many outlets in the main mass of Taurus a river —for a river full grown it issues from the rock and rushes down a steep, picturesque glen. The people have always recognized this river as the special gift of God, and about 800 B. C. they carved on a rock near the source a remarkable monument, which represents the god presenting his gifts of corn and wine—whose cultivation the river makes possible—to the king of the country. While the king is dressed in royal embroidered robes, the god is robed as a peasant; for he is the husbandman who, by patience and toil, subdues Nature for the benefit of man. Professor Ramsay recalls the monument and then tells us that the modern peasantry recognize as fully as the ancients that the Divine power is manifested here, but they express their belief differently. The tree nearest the spring is hung with patches of rag, fastened to it by modern devotees. In the contrast between the ancient sculpture and the modern tree you have, in miniature, the difference between Asia Minor as it was 2,700 years ago, and Asia Minor as it is under the Turk. The peasants' language is as poor as their ritual. If you ask them why they hang their rags on the tree, the one explanation is "dede var", there is a dede, or Divine power.

Baal-Tarz, the Lord of Tarsus, Holding in his Right Hand an Ear of Corn and Bunch of Grapes, thus Representing him as the Giver of Corn and Wine

How Paul would Reach the Heathen of To-day. He found in the few simple truths of natural religion possessed by the peasants of Lystra, and in the religious devotion and philosophical tenets of the Athenian, subjects neither for scorn nor contempt, but valuable material upon which to base his teaching, and a lever wherewith to lift them to a high conception of God and of true religion. It is not difficult to picture to ourselves how the apostle would have approached the devout son of Islam, with his belief in the one God and his firm faith in prayer, and what efforts he would have made to elevate the Mussulman's conception of himself as "the servant of God" into that of

his position as "a son" in Christ Jesus. In the Hindu he would welcome the sense of personal devotion, and find much cause for gratitude in his affectionate and warm-hearted nature, and he would have built, upon the one and the other, a substantial edifice of true devotion to Christ. Even among the lower classes of heathen, all that was good would have received sympathy and respectful treatment at his hands. Native systems of morals, often arising from sound ideals, would not be altogether discarded by him, and many a native custom, based on some remnant of spiritual insight, would escape absolute condemnation. *Maurice Jones,* in *St. Paul the Orator.*

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

Have we learned the lesson which Paul taught those primitive people of Lystra, that God is the Giver of good, that we are indebted to him for all the things of life?

Paul's work was never stopped by persecution or difficulties. He knew the dangers of opposing that excited throng who were bent on worshipping him,—the danger of entering the city again after being left for dead without the walls, the danger of stopping there on his return journey, but his courage was ever undaunted, his difficulties were only delights, his sufferings only incidents necessary to be borne in the course of his work. Can we study the record of so heroic a life and not let its example influence our lives? Can we allow ourselves to be turned aside by trifling difficulties from whatever our hand finds to do?

Our Prayer. For thy long-suffering toward us, for thy merciful providence shown us, for thy wondrous power in all things, we thank thee, Almighty God and Father. For our knowledge of thee as a living God and of Jesus as the Christ we thank thee, and we pray that the good tidings of thy love may be made known to all who live in darkness and are vainly seeking to worship thee through their sacrifices to things of wood and stone. In every way that we can, by our words, our money, our prayers, may we help in making the good tidings known the world round.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Pauline methods in missionary work today. See the Third Topic.
2. The revelation of God in Nature. See Rom. 1.18-23.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. Where did Paul and Barnabas go after Paul was stoned at Lystra? 2. Trace their route from Derbe back to Antioch in Syria. 3. In his report to the church at Antioch, what did Paul say was the great result of their first missionary journey? 4. Give a full report of the first missoinary journey from and to Antioch in Syria. 5. Who came to Antioch to make trouble? (Acts 15.1.) 6. Were they sent by the church at Jerusalem? (Verse 24.) 7. What did they say the Gentile Christians must do in order to be saved? 8. What was Paul's attitude toward this question? 9. Trace the route of the deputation from Antioch to Jerusalem. 10. Where were some of the churches through which the delegation passed? (Acts 8.5, 40; 9.32; 11.19.) 11. What brought joy to Christians in Phœnicia and Samaria? 12. What was the gist of Peter's speech at the Council? 13. What part did Paul take in the discussion? 14. What was James' judgment? 15. What does Galatians 2.1-18 tell about this conference at Jerusalem? 16. Did the decision of the Council settle all trouble thereafter for Paul? (*Guide,* ¶ 4, p. 229.) 17. On your map trace Paul's return journey from Derbe to Antioch to Syria, and then to Jerusalem and back.

Questions to Think About. 1. How could they say their decision seemed good to the Holy Spirit as well as to them? (*Guide,* p. 227.) 2. What is the meaning of "subverting your souls", v. 24? 3. What is the meaning of "confirmed them", v. 32? 4. Why was it necessary to abstain from things sacrificed to idols and from blood? (*Guide,* p. 227.) 5. Why is it a good way to settle differences by holding a conference? 6. When is it right to compromise? 7. Which earlier lessons of the year help us to understand this one? 8. Why did the Pilgrim Fathers come to our country? 9. What is said in our Declaration of Independence about freedom of worship?

Note-Book Work. Write Chapter IV, At Lystra.

THE COUNCIL AT JERUSALEM

Golden Text

For freedom did Christ set us free. Galatians 5.1a

LESSON Acts 15.1-35: verses 22-33 printed MEMORIZE verses 32, 33

22 Then it seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church, to choose men out of their company, and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; *namely,* Judas called Barsabbas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren: 23 and they wrote *thus* by them, The apostles and the elders, brethren, unto the brethren who are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia, greeting: 24 Forasmuch as we have heard that certain who went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls; to whom we gave no commandment; 25 it seemed good unto us, having come to one accord, to choose out men and send them unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, 26 men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. 27 We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who themselves also shall tell you the same things by word of mouth. 28 For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: 29 that ye abstain from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication; from which if ye keep yourselves, it shall be well with you. Fare ye well.

30 So they, when they were dismissed, came down to Antioch; and having gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle. 31 And when they had read it, they rejoiced for the consolation. 32 And Judas and Silas, being themselves also prophets, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed them. 33 And after they had spent some time *there,* they were dismissed in peace from the brethren unto those that had sent them forth.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

I. Trouble at Antioch, 1.
II. The Deputation to Jerusalem, 2, 3.
III. The Conference and Decision, 4-21.
IV. Deputation and Letter to Antioch, 22-29.
V. Reception of the Letter, 30-35.

22. *It seemed good to the apostles and the elders, with the whole church.* "The apostles and the elders probably uttered their judgments or votes in turn, and the multitude, the whole church, expressed their assent by acclamation" (*Rackham*).—*Judas called Barsabbas.* It has been conjectured that he may have been a brother of the Josephus Barsabbas suggested for the place of Judas among the apostles, Acts 1.23.—*Silas.* *Silas* is a contraction of *Silvanus,* a Latin name, and from Acts 16.37 we know that he possessed Roman citizenship. Later he became a great friend and companion of Paul.

23. *They wrote thus.* Note the tact with which the letter was written and the wisdom with which the decrees were formulated. Had they declared the rite of circumcision abrogated, the Hebrew party in the church would have rebelled.

24. *To whom we gave no commandment.* They disclaim responsibility for those Pharisaic teachers who began the trouble, verse 1.—*Have troubled you with words.* Although the letter does not directly say that the Jewish rite is not necessary (which was the theme of their words) it thus implies it.—*Subverting your souls.* The Greek participle ἀνασκευάζοντες means literally *packing up the baggage, breaking up camp for the march,* and then turning furniture upside down in dismantling a house. The trouble was unsettling their faith. *Saying, ye must be circumcised and keep the law,* A. V., is omitted in the R. V. as being only an addition of a copyist.

ST. JOHN AND ST. PETER ST. MARK AND ST. PAUL

From a Painting by Dürer

27. *Tell you the same things by word of mouth.* All that the letter tells together with all that it implies.

28. *It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us.* "The Lord had promised his own presence where two or three were gathered together to bind or to loose, and also the presence of his Spirit to be the guide of the church, when the ways appeared to diverge (Mt. 18.18-20; 28.20; Jn. 16.13). Accordingly in this unanimous decision they recognized the mind of the Holy Spirit; for oneness of heart and mind was a special sign of his working" (*Rackham*).—*No greater burden.* "Last of all, almost as a postscript, comes the chief part of the letter—the burden. To facilitate obedience the apostles first claim that their decision is the mind of the Holy Spirit, and then they make four demands on the disciples which are indispensable."—*These necessary things.* They were necessary for those times because of the conditions that prevailed. Jews could not eat with Gentiles who might put before them meat that had been offered to idols (see the eighth chapter of First Corinthians), nor could they have any social relations with a people who partook of blood and things strangled, for these were especially abhorrent to the Jews. In these things it was necessary for the Gentiles to conform to Jewish abstinence. "In essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, in all things charity."

29. *It shall be well with you.* For then you may live in harmony with your Jewish brethren.

30. *They.* The committee appointed to deliver this message.—*Dismissed.* "Sent away formally, an authorized embassy from the Mother Church at Jerusalem to the Disciple Community at Antioch."—*The epistle.* It has been called the *Magna Charta* of Gentile Christianity.

31. *They rejoiced for the consolation.* They rejoiced because the Jews in authority had been so broad-minded and liberal.

32. *Exhorted and confirmed them.* Strengthened them by their words. We can imagine their discourse, urging them to follow the example of the Jerusalem church in unity and mutual charity, and in this way they confirmed them in their faith, made the church which had been torn and troubled (14.22) a peaceful and united one.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

23. *They wrote thus by them.* Not only would the letter answer as the credentials of the messengers, Judas and Silas, proving to the churches that they were not like their earlier visitors from Jerusalem to whom the Church "gave not commandment", but the messengers would certify to the truth of the letter, for forged letters were not uncommon in those days.

23. *The apostles and the elders, brethren, unto the brethren who are of the Gentiles.* The second Book of Maccabees begins in a similar way, "The brethren, the Jews who are in Jerusalem and in the land of Judæa, to the brethren, the Jews who are in Egypt". But what a marvel has been wrought among these exclusive Jews that they now address Gentiles as "brethren"! The Mohammedans of Palestine to-day would not address the Christians there as "brethren".

28. *No greater burden than these necessary things.* The rite of circumcision, which the Judaizers had demanded, was regarded by them as "equivalent to all the commandments of the law, more necessary for Gentiles than all the affirmative precepts of Moses, or to love God and his neighbor". The "necessary things" stated by the Council are four in number. The followers of Mohammed in Palestine have directions given them in their laws as to what they must do in sixteen hundred different cases!

29. *That ye abstain from things sacrificed to idols.* The Gentiles slew animals in sacrifice to their idols and then sold the flesh; to eat such flesh was to the Jews to share in the heathen sacrifice.—*From blood.* The blood was to the Jews the life and therefore sacred as God's gift. See Gen. 9.4.—*From things strangled.* "When animals are killed for food", says a native of Palestine today, "the main artery in the neck must be severed, and the blood thoroughly drained, for no blood must ever enter into any food whatsoever".

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. Who was Cornelius? Under what circumstances was he baptized? Should his case have settled the question as to the admission of Gentiles into the Christian Church without their first becoming Jews by submitting to Jewish rites? What had happened in Antioch of Syria? What two Golden Texts have expressed the truth that God has no favorites among his children? What was the first occasion on which Paul left Jerusalem with letters giving him authority to do something?

Revisiting the Churches. After preaching and gaining many disciples at Derbe, whither Paul had gone the day after the stoning of Lystra, he and Barnabas retraced their steps, visiting the churches which they had founded in Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch in Pisidia. In each church they exhorted the disciples to continue in the faith, and appointed elders to help in the work. Continuing their return journey to Perga, they preached in that city and then from the port of Attalia set sail for Seleucia, the port of Antioch in Syria, whence they had started on their first missionary journey.

Trouble at Antioch. To the Church at Antioch Paul reported "all things that God had done with them", and gave as the great result of their work the fact that "God had opened a door of faith unto the Gentiles". The door for the Gentiles was too widely opened to suit the Jerusalem Church when the news reached them. Until Paul took up the work, the Christian churches, like the Jewish synagogues, were composed of Jews and proselytes, the proselytes being Gentiles who had received the Jewish rite of circumcision. In attendance there were also the "God-fearing" or "devout" Gentiles, who, not having been circumcised, were not in "full fellowship" with the rest. That God was no respecter of persons Peter had learned at Joppa, and the Jerusalem Church, having heard all the circumstances, had glorified God, saying, Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life. But the truth had been applied in only a few special cases, and the far-reaching consequences to the Church had not been foreseen. Now a crisis was reached. Certain members came from Jerusalem to Antioch and declared that unless all were circumcised according to the custom of Moses they could not be saved, thus insisting that Gentiles must first become Jews before they could become Christians.

The Deputation to Jerusalem. Paul and Barnabas opposed the brethren from Judæa, and after much dissension and discussion, the church of Antioch appointed Paul and Barnabas and others a committee to go to Jerusalem to discuss the question with the apostles and elders there. Escorted on their way by the Church, this committee went southward through Phœnicia and Samaria, and their journey was almost a demonstration, for their report of the conversion of the Gentiles produced great joy among the churches on the way.

Arrived at Jerusalem, they were honorably received by the whole Church, to whom they gave an account of what had taken place in the newly-founded Churches. Then certain Pharisees arose and said, "It is needful to circumcise them and to charge them to keep the law of Moses".

The Conference with the Three, According to Galatians 2. So great a subject, one that involved the question whether the gospel was for all the Gentiles or only for the few who should first become Jews, could not be settled at once. That Paul's account in Galatians 2.1-10 describes his visit to Jerusalem on this occasion is the usual view. From the latter, then, we learn that Titus, a Gentile convert, was with Paul and Barnabas, and that before the general council meeting there was a consultation with the Three Pillars of the Church, James and Peter and John. At this smaller conference the Three acknowledged Paul as the Apostle to the Gentiles and gave him and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, agreeing, we may say, to divide the mission field, Paul and Barnabas to be supreme where the Gentiles predominated, and the other apostles, among the Jews. The only thing the Three asked of Paul was that the Gentile Christians should remember the poor Christians of Jerusalem. The meeting of the council followed, which ratified the earlier agreement.

Oldest Pictures of Peter and Paul

The Meeting of the Council. At the public meeting, Peter arose and said: "God through me gave the gospel to the Gentiles. God makes no distinction between them and us, giving them also the witness of the Holy Spirit, and wherefore should we put a new yoke upon them? We, like them, are saved, not by circumcision, but by the grace of the Lord Jesus." After Paul and Barnabas had told of the wonders wrought by God among the Gentiles, James arose and said: "Peter has told you that God has given the gospel to the Gentiles. This has been foretold by prophecy. God promised that He would return to build the tabernacle of David in order that all the Gentiles might seek him. Therefore my judgment is that we should not trouble those Gentiles who turn to God, but ask them only to abstain from four things, the food that has been polluted by first having been offered to idols, fornication, what has been strangled, and blood. This they should do because of the feeling of the Jews who are found in every city."

The Deputation and Letter to Antioch. The words of Peter and Paul and James carried the day. The whole Church agreed to send two of their chief men, Judas and Silas, to Antioch with Paul to explain their decision. By these men a letter was sent which greeted the Gentiles as brethren, informed them that those from Jerusalem who had stirred up the trouble had not been acting under the authority of the church, commended Paul and Barnabas as beloved brethren who had hazarded their lives for the Lord, reported a unanimous decision, given through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, that no further burden should be placed on the Gentile Christians than the abstaining from the four things enumerated by James.

The letter was received with great rejoicing at Antioch. Judas and Silas, after exhorting the Church, returned to Jerusalem, but Paul and Barnabas remained with them for some time, preaching and teaching. The date is 49 A. D.

The Aftermath. In a sense, the struggle was not over. In fact, this council in its history very much resembled that of Nicæa, Mr. Rackham in his Commentary on Acts points out. "The great council met in 325 after the first outbreak of Arianism, and almost unanimously adopted the creed which excluded Arianism from the faith. But this was only the beginning of the struggle. After the council the controversy grew more intense, the church was nearly torn in two, and only after fifty years of fighting was the Nicene Creed generally accepted as the faith of the church. So now after this council the circumcision party renewed their efforts with greater zeal. St. Luke, however, is right in speaking of peace, because the struggle changed its character. The extreme party in its fanaticism became almost a separate 'sect' of 'Judaizers'; and their work was transformed into a personal attack on St. Paul. They recognized that 'the apostle of the Gentiles' was the great champion of Gentile liberty; and accordingly they dogged his footsteps, they disputed his teaching, they denied his apostolate. They sent emissaries even into his own Gentile churches to steal his converts away from him, and in many places they succeeded in stirring up scenes of strife such as had occurred at Antioch, and this with most disastrous effect in the churches of Galatia, which almost apostatized from St. Paul's gospel. We learn these facts chiefly from the letters of the third missionary journey—to the Galatians, Corinthians, and Romans. This last, however, written in 54, marks the turn of the tide. It was St. Paul's great vindication of his gospel; after that, we only find some last flames, as it were, flashing up in the Epistle to the Philippians, and the dying embers of the controversy in the Pastoral Epistles. But in attacking St. Paul the Judaizers were not alone. If they were zealous against Paul because of circumcision, the unbelieving Jews who would not even accept Jesus as the Messiah must have been infuriated at his preaching to the Gentiles. Accordingly, as we shall see, they pursued him with a relentless hatred. This controversy with the Jews altogether eclipsed in magnitude that with the Judaizers; and of the latter St. Luke tells us no more. Indeed, he had no reason to break silence. The controversy was personally most painful to St. Paul; but in the council at Jerusalem the church had definitely decided against the Judaizing party and the truth must prevail. The rapid growth of the Gentile churches of itself caused the controversy to die out, and there was no need to rake up the embers."

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The scene is first at Antioch in Syria, where the dissenters from Jerusalem came. Then the delegates, Paul and Barnabas and others, were escorted on their way by the church, perhaps as far as Seleucia on the coast. Their course was through Phœnicia and Samaria. As Galilee is not named, they probably went southward along the coast, passing through the cities of Sidon and Tyre and on to Ptolemais, and then crossed the Plain of Esdraelon into Samaria and turned southward to Jerusalem.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

How tactful is this letter sent from the Council at Jerusalem to the people at Antioch! Note that while it avoids saying what under the circumstances might naturally have been said which would have aroused antagonism, it nevertheless says all that is essential. It disdains authorizing those who had "subverted souls", and gives Paul and Barnabas their due meed of praise. "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than"—how infinitely better such a statement than words to the effect that we demand of you thus and so! Surely Paul had a hand in the wording of this note, for again and again he shows great tact in his dealings. Notice how often when compelled to reprove he begins by saying all that he can to cheer and encourage; his appreciation of the struggles and his sympathy with "the weak" make him a tactful leader.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Three hundred years ago James I was King of England. He claimed that he ruled "by divine right", that his word was law, and his people had no rights that he needed to respect unless he wished. Among his people were some who did not like all the forms and ceremonies of the Church in England, the Established Church, as it is called. King James would not allow them to form a separate church, where they could elect their own minister and manage their own affairs, and when they tried to do this some of them were put in prison. They escaped to Holland, where they could worship as they pleased. But they did not wish their children to become Dutch, and in 1620 these Pilgrims sailed in the Mayflower for America, and landed at Plymouth.

"They have left unstained what there they found—Freedom to worship God."

The Jews of Judea even after they became Christians insisted that all who would be Christians must keep all their Jewish forms and ceremonies. Like King James of England they felt that to them had been given the divine right to say what should be done in all religious questions. They found that beyond Judea Paul had been establishing churches where Gentiles were received as members. These Gentiles would not adopt all their Jewish ceremonies. Paul said they need not. The Church at Jerusalem said they must. Our lesson tells us how the question was raised and settled.

For Older Pupils. See the Historical Background.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I How to Settle Differences

Different Points of View. When Sir Robert Hart was a student at Belfast a professor had a packing-case brought into the class-room and directed his students to describe what they saw. It seemed a very simple thing to do; surely every one would say the same thing about it, he thought. Yet the man on the right described an address written in black letters; the one at the end dwelt on the iron hoops that bound the box; a third was interested in the long nails that studded a corner. Thus each, according to his view-point, saw that same commonplace packing-box in a different manner. After this practical demonstration, Sir Robert tells us, he never in his life could grow impatient with anyone who did not see exactly what he saw when they were standing on opposite sides of a question.

The Lesson from the Council at Jerusalem. Feeling was intense at that Council in Jerusalem. The strict Pharasaical believers saw the revolutionary

tendency of Paul's free gospel, honestly believed that all the Mosaic law must be lived up to, and felt that they were defending the faith of their fathers. Paul and his party knew that the peaceful course of their work was at stake, believed that Jewish rites were not necessary for salvation, and were firm in their determination to stand by a principle which meant so much in their work for God. There was free expression of thought, but there was none of bitterness of feeling. The main point at issue was decided on its merits. The conditions imposed rendered it possible for Jews and Gentiles to live together in harmony, and were a concession to the Jews, for there was "give and take" on both sides of the controversy, and the concession as to food was a reasonable one for the time being. Would that disputed questions in churches to-day were discussed and settled as wisely as this one of the early Church!

Paul's Way. Paul's beautiful yieldingness in every matter that touched his own opinions or his own practices, taken along with his iron will in what was not his own; these two things must be taken together to know Paul. Luther hits the whole matter here in a way that would have delighted Paul. "If two goats meet each other in a narrow path above a piece of water, what do they do"? asks Luther. "They can not turn back, and they can not pass each other; there is not an inch of spare room. If they were to butt at each other, both would fall into the water below and be drowned. What will they do, do you suppose? What would you do? Well, Nature has taught the one goat to lie down to let the other pass over it, and then they both get to the end of the way safe and sound." Now, Paul was always meeting goats on narrow ledges of rock with the sea below. And so are you, and so am I. Will you lie down and let me pass over your prostrate body, and then we shall both be saved? *Alexander Whyte, The Apostle Paul.*

II For Freedom did Christ Set us Free

The Problem Facing the Modern Church. The rock on which the Apostolic Church threatened to founder was the problem of the Gentile. Only as those Jewish Christians learned to sit and eat in brotherly fellowship with Samaritans and Gentiles did they attain to the fulness of the Christian life. Substantially the same problem confronts the modern church. The Christian Church faces the heathen world today much as the Jewish Church faced the Samaritan and the Gentile. If the Church intends to take its world-wide missionary enterprise seriously, if it proposes to become truly cosmopolitan, to become as universal as the human race, then it must face squarely the issue presented by the "heathen", by the "colored" races. Is the mere fact of "color" or "Asiatic" to be the line on which the church will justify differential treatment in the granting of economic opportunity, political justice, and international equality? If it is, then the foreign missionary enterprise will ever remain substantially fruitless. For the non-Christian world will not accept as "goodness" a doctrine of man which brands all races save one as inherently inferior and that single race as inherently and permanently superior merely on the basis of color. *Dr. Sidney L. Gulick* in *The Bible Magazine.*

Reach through the Outward and Find the Eternal. In this world of ours all our spiritual truths, all our eternal realities, have to be *expressed* in temporal, human, changing forms. There have been stagnant centuries which have kept unchanged the crystallized forms which they inherited, and they have supposed that faith would cease to be if this particular form of truth should vanish away. The Pharisee could not imagine a true religion without circumcision and the blood of bulls and goats; the Roman Catholic of the fifteenth century could not believe that real religion would survive if the doctrine of trans-substantiation—the real presence in the bread and wine—should be given up. The Calvinist supposed that his articles of faith were a permanent embodiment of truth and his plan of salvation the only possible one.

They all conceived of truth as something which could be expressed once for all in a form which all coming ages must keep unchanged. As well might we expect to bottle up the daylight to preserve it. Truth is never some dead thing which can be "laid out"; it is living, moving, quickening, outgrowing its old forms, taking on new expressions and preserving itself, as life does, by endless variations and by infinite embodiments.

There are transitions going on in every age. The things that can be shaken are removed, and the things that have waxed old vanish away. These things always bring trial to faith, for it is difficult for most persons to distinguish between the temporary form—*i. e.*, the human embodiment—and the eternal and abiding truth which lives on in the midst of change and vanishing forms.

Here comes the great test of spiritual power and insight. Those who have "short vision" and a traditional faith build on the temporal, and cling to the form which has grown familiar and dear to them, but if anything shakes *this* their faith is shattered, and they suffer shipwreck. Those, however, who have real spiritual vision look through the temporal and fleeting, through the transitory forms and embodiments, and settle their hearts and their faith upon the eternal reality—the Infinite Self who abides and works through all changes. *Rufus M. Jones* in *Practical Christianity.*

Liberty Regulated by Law. The possession and enjoyment of all rights are subject to such reasonable conditions as may be deemed by the governing authority of the country essential to the safety, health, peace, good order and morals of the community. Even liberty itself, the greatest of all rights, is not unrestricted license to act according to one's own will. It is only freedom from restraint under conditions essential to the equal enjoyment of the same right by others. It is, then, liberty regulated by law. *United States Supreme Court Decision.*

Memorial Day. Day after tomorrow is Memorial Day. How shall we celebrate it? Merely as an opportunity for outdoor sports? What thoughts should it bring to us? The title which the President of Union College gave to his recent memorial day address is pregnant with meaning—"The Conservation of the Past".

III Great Ecclesiastical Battle-grounds.

How God Revealed his Will in the Question at Stake at Jerusalem. "The things that God had done" through Paul were great, but marvelous was the thing which God had done in Paul himself during this first missionary journey. He, a Pharisee of the Pharisees, trained in all the strictest laws of his nation, has become the most liberal of all the Jews, has learned that his mission is to proclaim the gospel to the Gentiles, is firm in his belief that he is doing God's will, is immovable in his determination to champion the cause of the Gentiles against all attacks. How did he come to this belief?

For the stand taken by the Church at Jerusalem there is much to be said. The rite of circumcision had been observed since the days of Abraham, and no law from God or from Jesus the Christ had been voiced abrogating it. Jesus had proclaimed: "Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets; I came not to destroy but to fulfil". Who, then, had authority to declare the rite unnecessary? To Peter had come a vision, and as a result the Gentile Cornelius and his household had been received into the Church at Cæsarea, but the lesson had been quickly forgotten. What right had Paul to adopt his revolutionizing procedure and say that "circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing"?

Paul had the right of a revelation from God, a revelation shown, not by vision nor by word of prophet, but by results that proved God's will and purpose. God, who knoweth the heart, had borne the Gentiles witness, giving the . the Holy Spirit, even as he did unto the Jews; and he had made no distinction between Jews and Gentiles, cleansing their hearts by faith. God's will is shown in his ways with men as well as through his words to men. "Truth grafts itself on previous truth, modifying it in the process, just as idiom grafts itself on previous idiom, and law on previous law", says a great psychologist. On the truth as revealed to the nation of Israel is now grafted the truth as revealed to the Gentile nations, and in the process the new truth has modified the old.

Other Great Councils. No doubt the Council at Jerusalem, which had to decide whether Christianity was to be a Jewish sect or a world-wide religion, had a critical duty to discharge, but none more serious than the Council of Nice which affirmed Christ's deity; and if the former Council was justified in saying, "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us", the latter had as much right to use the same preface.

Why should we question that the Spirit of Jesus was in the Council of Trent and in the Westminster Assembly? It was disappointing that Trent did not give relief from the tyranny of the priesthood; yet it did reform the discipline of the Roman Church; that Westminster ignored the evangelization of the world, yet it conceived a very majestic idea of God. One does not forget the blazing mistakes of Church Councils, from that which ordered the celibacy of the clergy to the one which declared the infallibility of the pope, from the Swiss Synod which asserted the inspiration of the vowel points in Hebrew to the Scottish Assembly which cast out as a heretic M'Leod Campbell. This does not mean that the Spirit of Jesus has forsaken his disciples, it only means that he is constantly hindered by his instruments. It is not wonderful that the Church has erred; it is wonderful that, in spite of many a blundering and weakening influence, she has so fully entered into the truth of Jesus. *Ian Maclaren* in *The Mind of the Master.*

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

The one thing for which Paul is best remembered is his insight into the fact that the gospel is for all people. We know this truth, but are we doing our part toward giving the gospel to all?

To the Jews the restrictions imposed on the Gentiles in regard to food were of the greatest importance; to the Gentiles they were nothing, but in order to live comfortably with the Jews they were asked to observe them. In our life with one another there must always be a giving up of unessentials for the sake of peace.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The passing of Jewish Christianity. See Chapter VII of Ramsay's "Paul the Traveller".

2. The value of rites in Christian worship.

3. Christ's law for the settlement of controversies. Chapters 8-10 of "Christianity and Social Problems", by Dr. Lyman Abbott; chapter 10 of "The Gift of Influence", by Hugh Black. Recall the Kikuyu controversy of 1913, when the Bishops of Mombasa and Uganda celebrated the Communion in the Scottish Presbyterian Church, and welcomed at the service missionaries of various denominations, whereupon the Bishop of Zanzibar charged them with heresy and schism.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. What disagreement did Paul and Barnabas have and what was the result? (Acts 15.36-41.) 2. Whom did Paul choose to accompany him? (Acts 16.1-3.) 3. Who are *they,* verse 6? 4. What is the meaning of assayed, verse 7? 5. What lesson did Jacob once learn in a dream? (Gen. 28.11-17.) 6. Where did Judson, the great missionary, want to go, how was he hindered, and what better field did he find? (*Guide,* p. 238.) 7. How was Livingstone hindered and led in his travels? (*Guide,* p. 238.) 8. What did Lincoln say about his belief in Divine direction? 9. By whom was the call of England heard? (*Guide,* p. 239.) 10. Describe the course followed from Antioch in Syria to Philippi. 11. Locate all the places mentioned in the lesson. 12. What house became the headquarters of the first church in Europe? (Acts 15.40.) 13. What famous battle near the city of Philippi is recorded in Shakespeare's "Julius Cæsar"?

Questions to Think About. 1. What great advance step does the lesson chronicle? 2. Whose presence is indicated by the pronoun "we" in verse 10? 3. Must they not have crossed the district of Mysia to reach Troas? 4. In what sense, then, did they "pass by" Mysia? 5. Did God sometimes teach his people by dreams? 6. What instances can you recall? 7. Do our dreams often show what we have been thinking about? 8. Why did they suppose there would be a place of prayer by the riverside? (*Guide,* p. 235.) 9. Who were the first converts in Europe? 10. Begin a map showing Paul's second journey, and trace his course as far as Philippi. (See p. 253.)

Memory and Note-Book Work. Memorize verses 9 and 10, and the two short sentences on p. 241. Write Chapter V, At the Council at Jerusalem,

LESSON X—JUNE 4

THE CALL OF THE WEST

Golden Text

Come over into Macedonia, and help us. Acts 16.9

LESSON Acts 15.36: verses 16.6-15 printed MEMORIZE verses 9, 10

6 And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden of the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia; 7 and when they were come over against Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia; and the Spirit of Jesus suffered them not; 8 and passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. 9 And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: There was a man of Macedonia standing, beseeching him, and saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. 10 And when he had seen the vision, straightway we sought to go forth into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel unto them.

11 Setting sail therefore from Troas, we made a straight course to Samothrace, and the day following to Neapolis; 12 and from thence to Philippi, which is a city of Macedonia, the first of the district, a *Roman* colony: and we were in this city tarrying certain days. 13 And on the sabbath day we went forth without the gate by a river side, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and we sat down, and spake unto the women that were come together. 14 And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, one that worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened to give heed unto the things, which were spoken by Paul. 15 And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide *there*. And she constrained us.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

I. Disagreement of Paul and Barnabas about Mark 15.36-41.
II. Paul Chooses Timothy, 16.1-3.
III. Strengthening the Churches, 16.4-5.
IV. The Spirit's Guidance, 16.6-8.
V. The Call of the West, 16.9-10.
VI. The Journey, 16.11-12.
VII. The First Convert in Europe, 16.13-15.

6. *They.* Paul, Silas and Timothy. See ¶ 2, page 236.—*Went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia.* Visiting the church Paul had founded there on his first missionary journey.—*Having been forbidden of the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia.* Whether by inward impression, by a vision, by events, we are not told. See p. 234. "What to others are disappointments are to believers intimations of the way and will of God" (*John Newton*).

7. *Over against Mysia.* They were on the borders of Mysia.—*Assayed.* Tried. —*Bithynia.* The First Epistle of Peter is addressed to the Christians in Bithynia and others.—*The Spirit of Jesus.* The Holy Spirit.

8. *And passing by Mysia.* Follow the map. They passed by in the sense of not stopping to preach as they crossed Mysia.

9. *There was a man of Macedonia standing, beseeching him.* If Paul were in New York today and saw a Chinaman standing in the streets his heart would at once go out to the great need of the Chinese Empire. If that day in the streets of Troas he had seen a young man from Macedonia, representative of the continent of Europe which needed the good news of the Christ, no wonder that in his sleep that night he saw the beckoning hands calling him to come and help them. "Don't you think there was something more real than a human shape, speaking human words to the sleeping apostle, that there was that mighty

power which has been called 'the urge of God' acting upon a soul ready to obey the Divine behest to the uttermost?" (*Warshauer*).

10. *Straightway we sought to go forth into Macedonia.* "To know the need should prompt the deed" (*Mary Lyon*). This is the first use of the personal pronoun *we,* showing that Luke, the writer of the history, was in the company. Had he joined them here at Troas for the first time, or had he been with them from their start at Antioch in Syria? See ¶ 1, p. 24.

11, 13. *We made a straight course.* Literally, *we ran a straight course*—a nautical term, as we are told, for sailing before the wind. *The first of the district.* See below.—*Where we supposed there was a place of prayer.* See below.

14. *A seller of purple.* "Purple" stood for a much wider range of colors than it does now; colors varying from bright crimson to violet.—*One that worshipped God.* This expression is used to show that she was a Jewish proselyte.

15. *Baptized, and her household.* Her household consisted of children, servants and slaves, her helpers in the work—cleaners, packers, etc. See below.—*Come into my house and abide there.* Her house became the first Christian church in Europe, verse 40.—*Constrained us.* By entreaty.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

12. *The first of the district.* Amphipolis was ranked first by general consent, Philippi first by its own consent. In every province and district there was keen competition for the title *first of the province* or of *the district.* Every city which could pretend to the first place in respect of any qualification called itself first, and roused the jealousy of other cities which counted themselves equally good. Smyrna was "first of Asia in size and beauty"; Ephesus first of Asia as the landing place of every Roman official; Pergamos first as the official capital, and Sardis boldly styled itself "first metropolis of Asia, of Lydia, of Hellenism" on one of its coins. *W. M. Ramsay,* in *The Letters to the Seven Churches.*

13. *By a riverside, where we supposed there was a place of prayer.* When there was no synagogue, the Jews generally preferred to say their prayers by the water-side, whether of sea or river, for this afforded opportunity for their ablutions; compare 21.5, and Ezra 8.15-21. Josephus quotes a decree of Halicarnassus allowing the Jews to *make their prayers* (Greek *proseuchas*) on the *sea shore according to the custom of their fathers;* and two hundred years after Christ Tertullian still mentions *oratione litorales* (prayers on the shore) as a characteristic of the Jews. *R. B. Rackham.*

14. *A seller of purple.* Thyatira, like the Lydian land in general, was famous for its dyeing; and its guild of dyers is known from the inscriptions. Lydia sold the purple dyed garments from Thyatira in Philippi; and she had, no doubt, a regular connection with a firm in her native city, whose agent she was. In ancient times, many kinds of garments were woven in their perfect shape; and there was much less cutting and sewing of cloth than at the present day. Lydia, of course, sold also the less expensive kinds of garments; but she takes her trade-name from the finest class of her wares, indicating that she was a first-class dealer. She must have possessed a considerable amount of capital to trade in such articles. As her husband is not mentioned, and she was a householder, she was probably a widow; and she may be taken as an ordinary example of the freedom with which women lived and worked both in Asia Minor and in Macedonia. *W. M. Ramsay,* in *St. Paul the Traveler.*

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. What did Peter dream on the afternoon before Cornelius sent for him? What lesson did Peter thus learn? How did he put his vision into practice? Where was the Roman province of Galatia? Where was the district of Phrygia? What cities in this section had Paul visited on his First Missionary Tour? What happened to him at Lystra on this first tour? From what letters written to churches in Europe have we had lessons?

The Beginning of Paul's Second Missionary Journey. After the "Council in Jerusalem" Paul and Barnabas remained some time in Antioch of Syria. Then Paul's missionary zeal urged him onward, and he proposed to Barnabas that they revisit the cities where they had preached on their first journey. Barnabas wished to take John Mark with them, but Paul objected, for Mark

had left them before when they reached Perga in Pamphylia. Barnabas stood by Mark, and the two separated, Barnabas going southwest with John Mark to Cyprus and Paul going with Silas northward through Syria and then westward into Cilicia. We do not hear again of Barnabas, though according to tradition he was very successful as an evangelist. Mark justified Barnabas's defence, and in later days even Paul readily acknowledged his services, summoning him to his side during his imprisonment in Rome because he was "useful" to him "for ministering".

At Lystra Paul chose Timothy to be his attendant. Strenuously as Paul had objected to a Jewish rite being made the condition of salvation for the Gentiles, he had no objections to Jews themselves observing all their customs, and he had Timothy, whose mother was a Jewess though his father was a Greek, circumcised in order to satisfy the Jews. As they went on their way they reported to the Churches the decision of the Council at Jerusalem. The churches were strengthened in the faith and increased in numbers daily.

The date of the second missionary journey is 49 to 52 A. D.

The Importance of Paul's Invasion of Europe. Our lesson tells us how Paul was led to carry the gospel over into Europe. It was a movement fraught with immense importance when Paul crossed from Troas in Asia to Neapolis in Europe. Mr. Edgar Whittaker Work, in "Great Moments in the Life of Paul", calls to mind Xerxes' invasion of Europe. No one could have guessed that this little advance guard of seven represented a greater kingdom than that which Xerxes represented, though he brought together the armies of forty-six nations to contend against Greece, constructed a canal for his ships to ride upon, and flung a bridge across the Hellespont, over which his soldiers marched incessantly for seven days and nights. The picture of the magnificent Xerxes seated on his throne of gold, watching the tremendous disaster of the battle of Salamis, fades away with the years; so, also, the glory of the victories of the Roman Augustus; but the King whom Paul came to Europe to herald forth rises still to greater and greater power.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

From Antioch in Syria to Tarsus, over the Taurus Mountains to Derbe and on to Lystra, westward through South Galatia (the districts of Phrygia and Pisidia, where were Antioch and Iconium)—all this was familiar ground which Paul traversed. (According to the older view, the words "they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia" mean that they turned northeastward as far as Ancyra in Northern Galatia and founded the churches to which Paul wrote his Epistle to the Galatians. Such a work would have taken weeks or months, and in that case it is most strange that Luke does not mention it. The dotted lines on the map, p. —, indicate this route.)

Asia, as we have already learned, is the Roman province by that name which included the three districts of Mysia, Lydia, and Caria along the Agean Sea. When Paul reached Asia, and felt forbidden to preach in that province, he went northward intending to enter the province of Bithynia, which extended along the southern shore of the Black Sea. Having his plans again changed, he dotted lines on the map, p. 253, indicate this route.)

At Troas Paul was but three or four miles from the site of ancient Troy where Dr. Schliemann unearthed such ancient treasures. Recall the lore of Homer and Vergil, the city of Priam, the home of the beautiful Helen, around whose walls Achilles chased Hector, where the cunning Greeks played off the wooden horse upon the Trojans. Troas was an attractive, populous city in Paul's day. Today "the ground in every direction within the walls is strewn with carvings, mouldings, and pedestals in marble, some of which have inscriptions in the Greek language".

In two days' time Paul and his company sailed from Troas to the Island of Samothrace and on to Neapolis in the Roman province of Macedonia. Neapolis, where Paul landed on European soil, is now called Kavalla. It has a beautiful harbor, and fine arches remain of the Roman acqueduct of Paul's day.

From Neapolis to Philippi was ten miles. Philippi lay on the great marble-paved Egnatian road which united Italy across Greece with Asia, and was a

great commercial center. Philip, the father of Alexander the Great, had founded the city. It is famous in history as the place where, in 48 B. C. Octavius and Antony defeated the republican leaders, Brutus and Cassius, and the Roman Empire was born with Augustus as its first Emperor. In honor of the victory the city was made a Roman colony with the full title of *Colonia Augusta Julia Philippenssi.* This was the first city in Europe where Paul preached. To the church here Paul later wrote the most cheerful of all his epistles, calling them "my brethren beloved and longed-for, my joy, my crown". Today the riverside is still attractive, but only a few Turkish huts and ruins of two gateways supposed to date from the Emperor Claudius mark the site of the Phillipi that Paul knew.

Coin of Macedonia

Thyatira, the city whence Lydia came, was in the province of Asia, half-way between the Hermus and Caicus rivers. It seems to have had more trade-guilds than any other city of Asia: wool-workers, linen-workers, leather-workers, dyers, tanners, etc.

Coin of Philippi

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

To Paul that lone man standing there meant that the great continent of Europe was calling him. Yet when he obeyed the call and crossed over into Europe he was content to sit down by the seashore and talk to a very small group, and the conversion of the continent began by the conversion of one individual, Lydia the seller of purple.

The Victors in the Famous Battle of Philippi. Octavus and Antony on the Left; Lepidus on the Right

The twentieth century Macedonian cry is for Sunday-school teaches, and their work is with small groups. What of its results? I find the answer in an article in "The Home Department Magazine", written by Miss Margaret Slattery. "I often feel assured," Miss Slattery says, "that if God called to the ordinary men and women of the every day, in a loud voice, or spoke to them so that neighbors and friends might hear, or stopped them on the sidewalk and said to the crowd, 'I have chosen this man or this woman to do a great work in the world,' not many would hesitate to enter at once upon the task, whatever it might be. It took a burning bush, a hand white with leprosy made well in a moment, a rod transformed into a living serpent, to persuade Moses that God wanted *him* to undertake the task of setting the Hebrew people free. But God does not call men to his service in spectacular fashion today. He speaks to their souls, and to those who answer him, he offers a task which *in the beginning* gives no indication of what its results will be. But if one attempts it and accepts its increasing responsibilities it grows in his hands to be a *thing of power.*"

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger and Older Pupils. Begin with the map before you, letting your pupils name and locate the Roman provinces of Asia Minor and the cities there visited by Paul on his first missionary journey. Use the map throughout the lesson.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I The Lesson of Bithynia

Divine Guidance. Paul started out on his second missionary journey with the fixed purpose of strengthening the churches already established in Asia Minor, and of founding others there. That dangers and persecutions and stonings almost unto death could not deter him from carrying out a purpose once formed, we saw in our study of his first journey. But now he fails to accomplish all his projected plans. First, we hear that he was not permitted to preach the word in the district of Asia. Next he advances toward Bithynia and again is checked, the Spirit of Jesus suffering him not to go unto Bithynia. Bithynia means little to us, but it meant much to Paul. Yet he had the courage to surrender his cherished plans when he was satisfied that they were not in line with God's plan for him. Why was he restrained? Because God had a far greater, better work for him to do.

Every one has some Bithynia on which his heart is set, some cherished plan, good and legitimate—the ambition to succeed in some career, the determination to accomplish some valuable bit of work, to engage in some definite form of Christian ervice, it may be—but such human purposes are divinely overruled, and he is not allowed to enter the longed-for land. Why? Because God's plan is different from his plan. Paul was obedient to the will of God as it was made known to him. "As you go down the long corridor you will find that God has preceded you, and locked many doors which you would fain have entered; but be sure that beyond these there is one which he has left unlocked. Open it and enter, and you will find yourself face to face with a bend of the river of opportunity, broader and deeper than anything you had dared to imagine in your sunniest dreams. Launch forth on it, it conducts you to the open sea." The steps of a good man are ordered of the Lord. All things do work together for good to them that love God.

Two Missionaries' Bithynia. In the summer of 1812 Adoniram Judson reached Calcutta, burning with zeal to preach the gospel in India. There he was told that the British in India would not tolerate any interference with the religion of the people and he could not proceed. In his disappointment he went to the Isle of Frane for a short stay and then made an effort to land at Madras. There also he was turned away. As a last resort he went to Burma where, under Divine guidance, he was led to the Karens. You know the result of his work. The Karens had been prepared for his coming, for generations they had repeated the tradition that white teachers would come to tell them of the Book of God, their hearts were fruitful soil, whereas but stony ground in his Bithynia would have received his message.

Livingstone's travels were full of instances of times when he was prevented, sometimes by the Boers, sometimes by floods, from doing this or that, and he recognized afterwards that these were the means by which God had ordered his steps. "When he reached St. Paul de Loanda, after having been lost to knowledge for over two years, he was greatly tempted to go back to England in the Forerunner, a mail steamer which called on her way home. But 'the Spirit suffered him not'. He had to take his Makololo carriers back to their homes, and without hearing from wife and family he turned inland again. On her way home the Forerunner was lost with practically all on board."

A Young Man for whom God had Something Better in Store. In writing about Mr. H. A. Rodeheaver, Billy Sunday's partner, Mr. Charles Gallaudet Trumbull gives this experience:

In order to be able to support himself during his hoped-for law course, he and some friends went into a business venture by buying fourteen hundred acres of timber-land. The venture was a failure. Before the failure he had been urged to go to California with Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman's evangelistic party.

He declined. Later the invitation was renewed. A second time he declined. In his business failure the Lord seemed to be telling him that he had something better than a business life for this young man; and when, after some of his debts had been paid, a third evangelistic invitation came to him, this time to go with Dr. W. E. Biederwolf, he accepted the call for a two week's trial—and he stayed for five years. Then he had decided upon other work, when the offer from Mr. Sunday was received. That was five years ago, and he is still with Billy Sunday. Hundreds of thousands of hearts, the land over, are glad that he is.

The Testimony of Abraham Lincoln. The Almighty does make use of human agencies and directly intervenes in human affairs. I have had so many evidences of his direction, so many instances where I have been controlled by some other Power than my own will, that I can not doubt that this Power comes from above. I am confident that when the Almighty wants me to do, or not to do, a particular thing, he finds a way of letting me know it.

II The Man of Macedonia

What the Man of Macedonia Stands For. The Man of Macedonia represents primarily the unevangelized world. Our Man of Macedonia is the man of China, of India, of Africa, of South America, of any dark corner of the globe whose ignorance and sin calls to us, "Give us your Christ". And he is secondarily, the man anywhere who needs the help which we have the ability to give. "The Man of Macedonia" and his cry for help have passed into the literature of the world. At the present writing it is the Man of Belgium who is calling to us to "Come over and help us", and nobly our nation is responding to his call.

The Story of Gregory the Great and the Fair-Haired Angles. It was a long, long time ago—thirteen hundred years, and five hundred years after Paul and his friends crossed to Macedonia. That country had long been converted. So had the regions beyond it. The gospel had won its way right across the continent of Europe. In fact, the whole Roman Empire had become Christian. But beyond the empire, across a narrow sea, there lay a country whose people were still heathen. They worshipped the sun and moon, and some gods with strange names, Tiw, Woden, and Thor, and a goddess called Frigga.

They were a strong and fierce people, and the Christian inhabitants of the nearest parts of the empire had nothing to do with them. But there was one man to whom the vision came of carrying the gospel to those benighted people. He was a Christian minister; he lived in the city of Rome and his name was Gregory. He seemed to see them appealing to him—like the man of Macedonia to Paul—and saying, "Come over and help us". This is how it happened. He went one day into the market-place of Rome, and noticed three strange-looking youths exposed for sale as slaves. He was much struck by their strength and beauty, for they were well and sturdily built, with fair skins, blue eyes and golden hair. Gregory asked where they came from, and was told. It was the heathen country of which we are speaking. "What is their nation called?" "Angles." "That is well called", he cried. "They have the face of angels, and are meet to share with the angels in heaven. What is the name of their province?" "It is called Deira." "That also is well called", said Gregory. "*De ira*—from the wrath of God—they shall be rescued. Who is their king?" "Ælle." "Alleluia!" he shouted. "Their land shall sing the praise of God their Maker." And that is how Gregory heard the call from the heathen land, and resolved to answer it.

But, to his great disappointment, he found difficulties in his way. He was not able to go himself with the gospel, as he had intended. The Pope would not allow him to leave Rome, saying he could not be spared. But he never forgot his vision, and waited for God to open the way for its fulfilment. In the course of a few years he himself became Pope. This meant that, though he could not personally go with the gospel to that heathen country, he had the power to send others. And he did so. He sent a band of forty missionaries, under a leader named Augustine, and with very full and careful instructions. And God went with them, and opened the heathen people's hearts to receive the gospel. Soon that dark land became Christian,—and it has been becoming more and more Christian, thank God, ever since.

And now do you know the name of that heathen country? Why, England, of course. It was England that lay outside the Roman Empire, and outside Christendom in lonely ignorance and heathen darkness. It was our forefathers who drew the Christian pity of Gregory, and caused him to send missionaries to them. Surely, if any people ought to sympathize with those who are still heathen, we are the people. And if any people ought to send the gospel to the heathen, and to make sacrifices to do so, we are the people. *Condensed* from a *Sermon* by *Benjamin J. Gibbon.*

South America's Call. Mr. Robert E. Speer in an address before a recent convention of the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions described South America's great need of missionaries, and concluded with this incident.

Our boat was tied up one night along the East bank of the Magdalena River. It was an old-fashioned stern-wheel river boat, burning wood, and every three or four hours we had to stop to take on fresh fuel. We were awakened as the men ran out the gangway and began to bring on the wood. I fell asleep again, but suddenly was awakened by the sound of a plunging body in the water and a rush of footsteps on the lower deck and excited voices whispering, and then a half-strangled, pitiful cry, *"Oh, hombre"*, literally, "Oh, man!" but truly also, "Oh, brother! Oh, friend!" and then a gurgling sound and a swirl of the brown waters rushing by, and all was still. After a little while the work was done, the ropes were thrown off, and our boat went on its way up the stream. In the morning we asked the captain what had been the trouble, and he said that it was a Colombian private soldier who had been sleeping on the unfenced lower deck and rolled off in his sleep into the water; that nobody had seen him go; they had heard his cry, but were too late to help him, and the man was gone.

Often on that river journey and often on the days that have passed since, it has seemed to me that I could hear that only half-conscious, strangled cry sounding in my ears, "Oh Friend! Oh, Friend!" and that it was the cry of many millions of South American peoples making earnest, if silent, appeal. for the things that in Christ we have to give. "Oh, Friend!" That voice calls to you. Will it find in you the heart of a friend, to reply?

III Prayer Meetings

Places of Prayer in Manchuria. A missionary describes in a German paper a pentecostal service in Mukden and then tells about the prayer-meetings which everywhere followed the revival services. "The people have learned what a prayer-meeting means. They come just to pray—for nothing else. They meet on Sunday and Wednesday evenings and fall upon their knees and pray, not one alone, but all together. In a village not far from Mukden a heathen said, 'I hear that the prayer-meetings in Mukden are a place of wonderful power'. In another place where thirty men and women begged for baptism, I asked some when and where they had heard of Christ. 'Oh', they answered, 'our temple was destroyed in the war. We had no place of prayer, but since the Christians have started their prayer-meetings we have all gone there, and there we learned to pray, and now we wish to be Christians, since we know how much the prayer brings to them'."

If the Prayer Meeting is Gone, why should it not Come Back; A good many things are so which need not be so. It is always wise to recognize a fact and pay due deference to it, but it is sometimes evidently unwise to let an obvious fact assert itself in control of one's imagination. The discovery of the facts is only a first step in duty. The next step often is in resolving by all the power God has given us that the facts shall not remain as they are.

Take the hoary fact about the prayer meeting, that people will not go in adequate numbers. The prayer meeting has been "passing" for so long that the marvel is it has not entirely passed. Yet it is still here. If you plead for revival of it, you are faced with sets of figures or symposiums of any length which indicate that everywhere it is obsolete. Suppose that it is the fact. Is it a fact that lies in the nature of things? If it is only one of the accepted facts, whose explanation carries with it the assurance that it ought not to be, then it is only cowardly to be frightened into submission.

If the prayer meeting is gone, why should it not come back? The truth is, and it needs to be proclaimed widely, that the prayer meeting is more in evi-

dence in many places than it ever was. Suppose in your particular location people are neglecting the meeting which would do them good, is the reason for it inevitable? Do you have to submit to it? Is there no changing the situation? Are you dealing with a necessity as well as a fact? Certainly it is not necessary merely because it is a fact and has been one for a long time. *Editorial* in *The Continent.*

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

The Macedonians must have found the gospel very precious which came to them in answer to a need they did not know themselves. And so God has sent the supply for your needs before you wanted it—a God to worship, a Savior to believe in, a Comforter to rest upon. *Phillips Brooks.*

Boys and girls must keep their ears open and their hearts open to hear what God has to say to them, to see what he has done for them, and to find out where they can lend a hand. *Edward Everett Hale.*

There are men, women, and children calling all over the land for "help" and we put our fingers in our ears and go home and say, "Behold, we know it not". *Joseph Parker.*

God calls us through ability. *Gail Hamilton.*

God needs every man for some plan. *S. D. Gordon.*

Our Prayer. O Spirit of Jesus, Holy Spirit, we beseech thee to do for us what thou didst do for Paul, guide us in the way our feet should tread. Help us to know God's plan and purpose for us; help us, too, to do his will, as we know it, more perfectly. May we never be deaf to the cry of the Man from Macedonia in whatever way his need is made known to us. Bless thy messengers who are carrying the gospel to those who know thee not. Quicken our interest in the wonderful work that thou art doing in heathen lands, and make us generous in our support of that work.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Mere darkness is an appeal for light. See Chapters I and IX of "God's Missionary Plan for the World", by Bishop J. W. Bashford; The Call of Japan and the Call of China, pp. 274 and 281 of *Missionary Review of the World*, April, 1914.

2. The coming of Luke into the story. See Chapter IX of Ramsay's "St. Paul the Traveller".

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. What is the force of the verb *overtaken*, v. 1? (*Guide*, p. 242.) 2. What is the force of the last part of the verse? (*Guide*, p. 242.) 3. What does Mt. 8.17 give as the law of Christ? 4. What is the connection between vv. 2 and 3? (*Guide*, p. 243.) 5. What does Ps. 55.22 say to do with your burden? 6. What is the difference in meaning between the two different Greek words translated *burden* in verses 2 and 5? (*Guide*, p. 243.)

Questions to Think About. 1. Why should we deal leniently with one overtaken in a sudden sin? 2. How did Peter learn this? 3. Whom did Jesus accuse of thinking themselves to be something? 4. What does verse 4 mean? (*Guide*, p. 243.) 5. Who are "members of the household of faith"? 6. What law of Christ is fulfilled by bearing others' burdens? 7. Can one obey both the exhortations in verse 2 and 5? 8. Read Longfellow's "Bridge": in which of the stanzas is the singer absorbed in his own burden? 9. Which stanzas show him sympathetically interested in the burden of others? 10. What effect has this other interest upon his burden? 11. Is it true that the way to lighten your own burden is to add to it the burden of some one else?

Memory and Note-Book Work. Commit to memory those stanzas of Longfellow's "Bridge" which tell how the singer lost his burden. Memorize "Galatians 6.1-10. Write Chapter VI, Called to Europe.

Questions upon the Epistle to the Galatians. (See pp. 32, 33 of *Guide*.) 1. To whom was this Epistle written? 2. Why was it written? 3. What is its character? 4. What is its literary style? 5. What are its chief lessons for to-day? 6. Memorize the verses mentioned on page 33 of the *Guide*.

SOWING AND REAPING—TEMPERANCE LESSON

Golden Text

God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. Galatians 6.7

LESSON Galatians 6: verses 1-10 printed MEMORIZE verses 1, 2

1 Brethren, even if a man be overtaken in any trespass, ye who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; looking to thyself, lest thou also be tempted. 2 Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. 3 For if a man thinketh himself to be something when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. 4 But let each man prove his own work, and then shall he have his glorying in regard of himself alone, and not of his neighbor. 5 For each man shall bear his own burden.

6 But let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things. 7 Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. 8 For he that soweth unto his own flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth unto the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap eternal life. 9 And let us not be weary in well-doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. 10 So then, as we have opportunity, let us work that which is good toward all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of the faith.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

I. Deal gently with Another's Trespass, 1.
II. Share Another's Burdens, 2.
III. Avoid Self-Deception, 3.
IV. Do not Test your Conduct by that of Others, 4.
V. Bear your own Load of Responsibility, 5.
VI. Share with your Teachers, 6.
VII. The Law of Harvest, 7-8.
VIII. The Reward is Sure, 9.
IX. Do Good, 10.

1. *Overtaken.* The Greek verb means especially *taken unaware, taken by surprise,* surprised by the fault itself. He is not an habitual, hardened offender.—*Ye who are spiritual.* "If they professed the Spirit of Christ, they could not but produce the fruits of the Spirit—of which gentleness, or meekness, is one" (*Perowne*). See 1 Cor. 2.14; 3.1-4; 4.21.—*Restore such a one.* Set him right; correct and bring back to right actions. The Greek means bring back the man *into his place;* "it is a metaphor taken from a dislocated limb, brought back by a skilful and tender surgeon, into its place". We are to be experts in re-setting broken wills, and in repairing broken consciences, and in mending broken hearts. And there is far more work than we have doctors, and so the fallen are becoming the hopeless and the dying. Restore such a one" (*Jowett*).—*In a spirit of gentleness.* Without severity. The man who has suddenly fallen into sin should be dealt with leniently.—*Looking to thyself, lest thou also be tempted.* "There is no sin which any man hath done, but another man may do the same" (*Augustine*). The enemy of efficiency is self-sufficiency.

2. *Bear ye one another's burdens.* His weakness, his yielding to sudden temptation, his sorrow and remorse may be his burden. Sympathetically share his cares and sorrows. See Rom. 15.1. "No one is useless in this world who lightens the burdens of it for any one else" (*Dickens*).—*And so.* By obeying this exhortation.—*Fulfil the law of Christ.* The law of Christ is the law of love. See Mt. 8.17.

3. *For if a man thinketh himself to be something, when he is nothing.* The

connection with the preceding verse is evidently that one who refuses to bear another's burden does so from mistaken pride, from a false idea that he is somebody too exalted to stoop to another's burden. Yet in the sight of God he is only "as sounding brass and tinkling cymbal".—*He deceiveth himself.* "Few things are so stumbling as our conceit of ourselves" (*King*).

4. *Prove his own work.* Test his own conduct, by the example of Christ.—*Then shall he have his glorying in regard to himself alone, and not of his neighbor.* Then, if he stands the test, he may rejoice because of his own merit and not because he is better than his neighbor: he should not take others as his standard, and rejoice because he is better than some weaker or worse man. The *neighbor* is the *other.* See Rom. 13.8, RVm. Recall the Pharisee's boast, "Lord I thank thee that I am not as other men", and compare with it Paul's glorying, "By the grace of God I am what I am".

5. *For each man shall bear his own burden.* Or, *load,* RVm. The connection here with the preceding verse is that each man is held responsible for his own actions, irrespective of what his neighbor's may be; he must render an account of himself to God. In the Greek there is no seeming contradiction here with verse 2, as in the English, for two different words are used for the English burden. In verse 2, it is βάρη and means pressure, fatigue, all that is burdensome, tires or gives trouble, hence especially griefs, misery. A man was journeying from Jerusalem to Jericho, brigands attacked him, and left him half-dead by the roadside. The Good Samaritan came along, burdened himself with him, brought him to the inn, and saw that he was well-cared for. Was it not his duty to help that man bear his burden of trouble? In verse 5 the Greek word is φορτίον and means a load, as a ship's cargo, a soldier's pack. Two men are traveling along with burdens on their backs. One of them declares his burden greater than he can bear, and throws it down. His companion, who is no stronger than he, adds it to his own, and they trudge on. What think you of that first man; should he not have borne his own burden? Every one has his own rightful load, responsibility, accountability, which it is his duty to carry; he has no right to let others carry it for him. "The ingenuity of the ignoble in making themselves comfortable at other people's expense," observes Dr. Watkinson, "is no small part of the comedy and tragedy of human life".

6. *Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things.* By *good things* are meant money, food, clothing, etc.; such the pupil is to "communicate", or share, with the teacher, contribute toward his support. Probably Paul has heard that some of the Christians in the churches of Galatia listened to the preaching of the Word but failed to help support the preacher.

7. *God is not mocked.* "To connect this verse with its predecessor we must conclude that Paul suspected the Galatians of meanness toward their recognized instructors, while they were under the spell of the Judaizing visitors" (*Adeny*). —*For whosoever...reap.* This is "God's law of the spiritual harvest". "'Wild oats' take something out of the soil of a man's life that no system of crop rotation can restore" (*Youth's Companion*). We usually think of this verse as referring to retribution for wrong-doing, but the happier meaning is equally true that "he who sows wheat reaps wheat, not tares".

> Life's field will yield—as we make it—
> A harvest of thorns or of flowers. (*Alice Cary.*)

8. This is a particular example coming under the general truth expressed in the preceding verse.—*Unto his own flesh.* The *flesh* is here thought of as the evil nature. "He who tills the field of the carnal life."—*Reap corruption.* "A harvest doomed to perish."—*He that soweth unto the Spirit.* Who tills the field of the spiritual life.

9. *Let us not be weary in well-doing.* "Folks that get weary in well-doing generally haven't done much at it, when you come to hunt up their records. The weariness is usually at the beginning, and sorts out the workers from the quitters."—*We shall reap, if we faint not.* Our reward is sure.

10. *So then.* Since our reward is sure.—*As.* While, RVm.—*Household of the faith.* Followers of Christ whose faith makes them one household or family.

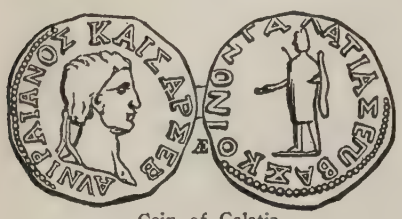
THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. What lessons from the Epistles have we had this year? What was our lesson from Romans? What lesson from Philippians did we have? Where were the Philippians, and why did Paul write to them? From what Epistle was our lesson taken about Heroes of Faith? What do we know about the authorship of that Book? From what Epistle was our Easter lesson given?

Paul's Epistle to the Galatians. Our temperance lesson for this Quarter is taken from the Epistle to the Galatians, written by Paul to the Church in Galatia. See pp. 32, 33 of our Introduction.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Some time ago one of the circulars of the Canadian Department of Agriculture stated that tests carried out at the experimental farms for ten years had fully demonstrated that increased crops result from early sowing. First a sowing took place just after it had become possible to sow the seed, and then four other lots were sown at recurrent intervals of a week. The best crop was from the earliest sowing. The average of the ten years' experience showed that with wheat a delay of one week beyond the earliest period entailed a loss of over 30%; 2 weeks, 40%; three weeks nearly 50%; and four weeks 56% of the crop. Were statistics possible in the spiritual field as they are in agriculture, the result would be much the same. The great hope of the Church is in the early sowing. Of all sowers and reapers the Sunday-school teacher has the best based hope of the thirty, sixty, and one hundred-fold.



Coin of Galatia

Richard Jefferies writes concerning spring: "As soon as the violets push up and open their sweet-scented flowers under the first warm gleams of the spring sunshine, the snake ventures forth from his hole to bask on the south side of the bank! It is not different in human life. The snake appears with the violets—in the springtime of life. Evil impulses and influences soon begin to act upon young life. Early sowing is the only wise sowing. Hence the tragic value of the teacher's opportunity. It is worth every effort. Such work should appeal to the best and most devoted members of every church, and should be duly and rightly honored. *James Learmount.*

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Recall by questions two scenes in the life of Peter. First, the Last Supper, when Jesus said to his disciples, "All ye shall be offended in me this night", and Peter confidently cried out, "If all shall be offended in thee, I will never be offended", and then Jesus foretold his denial, but again Peter declared with assurance, "Even if I must die with thee, yet will I not deny thee". Second, Peter's three denials at the trial of Jesus. Then call for the first verse, ask what the last part means—Looking to thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

For Older Pupils. Call for answers to the questions assigned upon the Book of Galatians.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Bear Your Own Burdens

Letting Others Bear the Brunt. What reader of "Bleak House" does not remember the amiable, incompetent Harold Skimpole? Perhaps Dickens' whimsical fancy never created a more extravagant character, and yet, on smaller lines, it is as true to life as Mrs. Jellyby herself. Mr. Skimpole was fairly intelligent, it seems, a charming conversationalist, always agreeable, but utterly incompetent to deal with the petty details of everyday life. He had no head for business, and no desire to have one. He spared himself by letting other people

do the worrying over his tangled affairs, and had formulated the comfortable doctrine that his friends were the better for showing him kindnesses, and, as he was certainly the better for accepting them, the arrangement was a gain all around. Esther Summerson emptied her slender purse to pay his debts, before she had been many hours at Bleak House, and Mr. Skimpole went on smiling, reading the newspapers, and drawing clever sketches, with a spirit as serene as a summer sky.

This is a caricature, you say. Not a doubt of that, but what is a caricature, pray? A caricature is a likeness—overdrawn. Indeed, the point of a clever cartoon is fully as much in the resemblance of the figures and faces to real figures and faces as in the grotesque exaggeration of detail in both. Perhaps there never was a Harold Skimpole, as Dickens pictures him, but there are a host of miniature Harold Skimpoles, who claim kinship with the original by letting others bear the brunt of things. *Charles T. White,* in *Wellspring.*

Each One has "Marias" of his Own. "Don't you suppose that I have 'Marias' of my own"? ejaculated a young woman to whom another was telling a tale of woe concerning her unpleasant relations with an acquaintance. There is a suggestion here for those who use their friends as a sort of "dumping-ground" for the refuse of their minds, for bitterness increased by the telling, for happenings that would better be left untold, for suspicions which ought to be forgotten—buried deep under kindly thoughts and radiant desires.

It is safe to assume that each one has troubles and frets enough of his own without listening to those of others; that each one needs and is entitled to the best his friends can give him instead of the worst. Remember this when you are tempted to meet your friend upon any but the highest ground. *Eleanor Root* in *Sunday-School Times.*

Bear ye One Another's Burdens. "The Burden That Comforts": This phrase appeared in a leaflet sent out by a certain life insurance company. The man using it insisted that the burden of keeping up his premiums comforted him, as he thought of the protection he was providing for his wife and family.

The philosophy is as true as the phrase is striking. Burdens borne for a worthy end yield great comfort. There is comfort in the heightened sense of self-respect experienced by such a burden-bearer, comfort in the thought of the lightened burdens of those relieved by the extra strain we bear. Love is the great comforting factor in burden-bearing. "Love endureth all things." "Love never faileth." Love seeks burdens on behalf of the loved ones.

No man is more to be pitied than the cowardly shirk who refuses to get under the burdens of a family. He limits the objects of his love to himself and fancies that the burdens of self-care will not be grievous to be borne. He will finally become an unbearable burden to himself, and the burden will never at any stage yield comfort.

It was the ambition of Jesus to have all men and women related to him as members of his family. Whoever followed him was as a mother, brother, sister. His burdens were race burdens, world burdens that crushed out his life at its early morning hour, but he got such comfort from bearing them that he could offer us no better heritage than comfort-yielding burdens. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."

Where to Obtain Help with your Burdens. A beautiful thought comes to us from a native Christian of India. In that land there are resting places along the road which have a shelf above them on which the weary traveler may drop the burden he carries on his head. After he has rested, he can easily readjust the load on his head, and trudge on with renewed energy. Such a resting place is called a sumatanga: "Christ is my Sumatanga", says the Indian convert. Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee. I came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, said Christ; not to have my burdens borne for me, but to bear those of others; I came to give my life a ransom for many.

"There are some burdens which pass away, even while they are being recounted, they evaporate in the telling. To talk about them to God is to lose them! If you take a dimmed, steamed mirror into a dry, sunny room, the obscuring veil passes away, and the mirror becomes clear. And there are some burdens which perplex the spirit, and hinder its outlook, which, when we take them to the Lord, pass away, like mist in the sunny light of the morning."

II A Cheering Message

Whatsoever a Man Soweth that shall he also Reap. Dr. J. H. Jowett, instead of dwelling on the gloomy application of our text, used it in a recent sermon as a glorious promise. It is like the sign-board in the neighborhood of Snowden, he said, on one of whose arms are the words "To the blasting" and on the other "To the summit". It is the summit road that Dr. Jowett takes in this condensed report.

Whatsover a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For the principle is this—if we want a fine harvest we can grow one. We can look upon fields of noble achievement, ripened years of character radiant with the glory of heavenly strength and beauty, and we can have them—we can grow them. All the best things in life are crops, not something given to us, but something we have grown. I fancy all the richest things in life do not become ours by chance, but by wise and slow and studious culture. And so I want to fasten your eyes upon some very, very, fine ripe fields—fields of fine rich moral achievement. I propose to take you to the farm of the Apostle Paul. I don't know a better farm, and if we are going in for growing crops we might as well look upon the best.

What do I mean by a crop? Simply, life's real crops are found in life's habits. I don't think of a crop as a single act, but an attitude—the product of many acts. When I use the word "crop" as related to life I am thinking of certain characters, of fixed and matured dispositions. In a word, the harvest of life is that which has become habitual. The things we come to do by instinct are crops: the things that are most natural to us; the things we most habitually do when the need of restraint is removed; the things we do by heart. And if you will tell me what a man does by heart, what he does naturally, instinctively, habitually, then you are describing to me his crops. His habits are his harvest. If, therefore, I turn to the apostle's crops I turn to his habits, and then suggest that even his finest habits were grown. They are crops and they are the result of much painstaking and assiduous culture.

What field do you think you would go to on his farm? Look at this crop—his glorious power of communion with God. That crop is sometimes so fine it baffles description. If I had time enough I should have to read almost the whole of the records of his life, but I can give you sentence after sentence in which he proves to you how easy and spontaneous and natural has become his fellowship with the Unseen. This man's unshrinkable and unwavering faith when he approaches God—the serene confidence in his reception, and the quiet and peaceful certainty of communion with God—it is not a mechanical make-believe, it is a natural crop, and wherever you turn in the life of the Apostle Paul you have evidence of the naturalness of his communion with the Lord.

How did he do it? Well, you know the old word, and I cannot find a better: "Sow a thought and you reap an act; sow an act and you reap a habit; sow a habit and you reap a destiny." But I am inclined just to fix my thought upon the earlier phrase in this sentence—"Sow a thought". Young people, one thought with the soul behind it deliberately held and fixed upon God—one thought—not fifty squandered anywhere, anyhow and any way—one thought, then another, then another, and always deeply and seriously until you will acquire a mental mood—a mood of prayer. Sow an act. It may be a very simple act—I have sometimes said even the very act of kneeling. Sow an act of kneeling quietly, sincerely, reverently, repeatedly until the act of kneeling in body becomes an attitude in spirit, and your soul asks what it needs when you go about your daily work. Or sow an act of praise, sow a thought of thanksgiving, sow another, sow another, sow another, until the single thanksgivings have become the mood, and as Paul says, "We give thanks without ceasing".

You will find many other crops of the Apostle Paul to which I would urge you to pay heed. There is the crop of unfailing joy; there is the crop of unfailing service; the habit of compassion for men, and the habit of unclouded hope. God grant we may be farmers after the pattern of the Apostle Paul—knowing God, loving men, and being hopeful children on the pilgrim way. Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

Sow Good Seed in Youth. The harvest of a life depends on the sowing in our young days. Youth is the base of the pillar of life. And you know that

no pillar can be safe unless the base is sound and strong. It would be useless for the pillar, when nearly built to say—if it could speak: "I want a sound base". It would be too late. So, too, it is useless for men and women to wish for youth again.

Do you see, then, how very important youth is? What a great responsibility it casts upon you, this youth that you have! It is yours now. Make the best of it!

But how? How shall you be certain that the base of life's pillar shall be so sure and strong that all of it may be safely built? There is only one thing that can make it certain and that is that the foundation upon which the base is laid shall be firm.

If your youth is on a firm foundation, your life will be strong and splendid. St. Paul tells us where such a foundation can be found. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

So if in youth your life is rooted and grounded in this foundation, you may look forward to a life in which your happiness shall grow from day to day until you reach the Land of Perfect Happiness. *Sydney Cope Morgan.*

We Reap as we Have Sown.

We shape ourselves the joy or fear
Of which the coming life is made,
And fill our future's atmosphere
With sunshine or with shade.
The tissues of the life to be
We weave with colors all our own,
And in the field of destiny
We reap as we have sown. *Whittier.*

He that Soweth Bountifully, shall Reap also Bountifully. In a New England church, where only a few men had been interested in Bible study, a dozen individuals, with a vision, met one evening in the church vestry and arranged a Bible campaign calling for an enrollment of two hundred and fifty men in Bible classes within a year. They had first prayed. The money to be appropriated, the place, the time, printing, course of Bible study, and men to be secured, were all considered relative to the spirit and demand of this invigorating ideal. In six months the membership of the organization passed the three hundred mark. At the end of the first year more than four hundred men were enlisted in Bible study. In four years one hundred of these men had joined the church.

Has Christian faith entered into the Bible program of our Churches? Do we believe sufficiently in the Bible to attempt great things with it and for it? *Clayton Sedgwick Cooper,* in *The Bible and Modern Life.*

III Temperance Lesson

A Sowing that Reaps Intellectual Loss. Professor O'Shea, of the University of Wisconsin, affirms that over ninety per cent. of all boys who fail in the grammar and high schools are smokers! The tobacco evil is the most serious one with which the public school has to contend. Records kept of the work of students who were not addicted to the smoking habit when they entered the high school but who acquired it later show, he says, that the pupils became unruly and their school work declined greatly. What a hold the smoking evil has gained on public school boys is indicated by the statements made by a number of high school principals who declare that from fifty to eighty per cent. of high school pupils are now smoking cigarettes.

Alcohol leads to Physical Bankruptcy. As a work producer alcohol is exceedingly extravagant, and, like all other extravagant measures, leads to a physical bankruptcy. It is also curious that troops cannot work or march on alcohol. I was with the relief column that moved on to Ladysmith, and, of course, it was an extremely trying time by reason of the hot weather. In that enormous column of thirty thousand, the first who dropped out were not the tall men, or the short men, or the big men, or the little men—they were the drinkers, and they dropped out as clearly as if they had been labelled with a big letter on their backs. *Sir Frederick Treves.*

The Proportion of Crops. "I cannot speak for temperance more effec-

tually", said Booker Washington, "than to quote old Uncle Calhoun Webster. He said, 'When I sees a man a-goin' home wid a gallon o' whiskey and a half-pound o' meat, dat's temperance lecture enough for me—an' I sees it ebery day. An' I knows dat eberyt'ing in dat man's house am on de same scale—a gallon o' misery to ebery half-pound o' comfort'."

Where Ruin Lurks. About thirty years ago there stood, on the most splendid avenue of Newport, a palace built by one of the richest men of New York. It was said to be a copy of the Palazzo Doria in Venice. There was a Moorish room, a Chinese room, a gallery of pictures of the most famous of modern masters. It was a luxurious, beautiful home.

The owner took possession of it in May, and in July his only son died of a low, lingering fever. During the seven succeeding years the house was occupied by different tenants, but ill health or death visited each. It was found at last, after repeated, fruitless examinations, that an old drain existed under the foundations of the house, and that, unseen, it had been pouring death into the beautiful dwelling all these years. The walls were so impregnated with poison that the house, after remaining without a tenant for some time was razed to the ground.

The lives of some men are like this dwelling. They have every fortunate circumstance which good birth, influence, wealth, or education can give to make them strong, and noble, and helpful to other men; yet some foul trait, inherited or acquired, breathes poison and death through the whole life.

There is a marble bust of the boy Nero in the gallery of the Uffizi palace which shows him to have been "that noble child" of whom history tells us, affectionate, gay, and kind; but the sensual lip hints of deadly poison already at work within, and it foretold the monster of history.

Physicians sometimes examine the blood of their patients and detect disease by the revelations of the microscope. Every one who is beginning his work in the world should search his heart, if, perchance, there may be in it a poisoned drop which may corrupt and ruin his life. *Youth's Companion.*

Two Different Harvests in Russia. Four or five years ago Russia passed a law that the eagle which was in use above saloons should come down and its place be taken by a skull and cross-bones. The authorities of Russia were then realizing what was the terrible harvest of that crop. One of its writers, Ivan Rodiniow, declared: "We are a poor, miserable, beggared people. Most of the children are kept from school because we have no longer money to build schools and pay teachers. But we have saloons, public and private, in every corner of the Holy Empire. The crowd presses into the drink shop, poisons itself with this devil's potion, and winds up in the police court—health and sense gone. We Russians must be for all eternity a drunken, criminal people, a scandal to humanity, until the patience of the Creator comes to an end and he sweeps us away from the earth as disgracing the planet. Or he will make us the slaves of a worthier and more temperate people." Other temperance workers published these appalling facts: Russia annually loses four million and a half children because of intemperate mothers; one million working men die annually from drink in public houses; hundreds of thousands of alcoholic sufferers fill the hospitals; eight hundred thousand criminals are in jails, chiefly due to drink!

Then came the day when the troops were mobilized for the great war. All over the Empire vodka shops were closed by special policemen, who locked up the supply of liquor and placed the imperial seal on the shops. (Vodka was the national alcoholic drink.) Not a drop of spirits reached the army. Step by step the prohibition extended to the use of lighter drinks. The saloons remained closed, and after six months of war Dr. Vesselitsky writes: Prohibition has completely transformed towns. All of a sudden drunkards and beggars disappeared from the streets; the penitentiary had no more prisoners and municipal judges very little work to do. In Petrograd the daily criminality dropped seventy per cent. The savings banks in all Russian cities and towns have never had such enormous deposits as since August, 1914. In that length of time the peasantry, it is reported, look like a different race. The marks of suffering, the pinched look of illness and improper nourishment has gone from their faces, and they are neatly and better dressed. And notwithstanding the great percentage of laborers in the ranks

of the army, it is pointed out that the efficiency of those remaining, owing to enforced sobriety, has increased from fifty to one hundred per cent. A Petrograd correspondent writes: "Although I myself for more than thirty years have taken my 'glass' I cannot affirm that the deprivation has been hard. Nor do I notice any desire for 'the good old times'. One feels better in one's head, more elastic, and fitter for work. It is only the first step that seems hard. One has not the energy to break with the habit of years. But with the support of an autocrat's word it goes well."

That autocrat, Emperor Nicholas, after six months' trial issued this decree:— "I have decided to prohibit for ever in Russia the Government's sale of alcohol."

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

What shall our harvest be? What are we sowing? He that soweth unto the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap eternal life. He that is sowing unto the Spirit is living the kind of life that is worth being extended eternally.

Our Prayer. Our Heavenly Father, give to us that gentleness which deals kindly and wisely with an erring brother, for we know that without thy help, we, too, are prone to stumble and fall. Make us alive to the golden chance of doing good, eager to lighten the burdens of others that we may fulfil the law of Christ, the greatest of all burden-bearers. From the guilt of self-righteousness and the folly of judging ourselves by human standards keep us, O God. Strengthen us to bear bravely the burden that is not of our own making, but is a gift from thee for our own good. May we weary not in well-doing, and then the words "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" will be for us a glorious promise, not a solemn warning. All this we ask in the name of thy Son Jesus Christ.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The duty of attempting the rescue of the fallen, verse 1. See p. 242 of "The Education of the Heart", by *Dr. W. L. Watkinson.*

2. Up-to-date temperance information. Ask the members of the class to search for newspaper clippings and magazine articles giving the latest news and bring them to class for discussion.

3. The Epistle to the Galatians. See pp. 32, 33 of our Introduction.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. Why were Paul and Silas in prison? 2. How does Professor Ramsay explain the maid's affliction? (*Guide,* p. 252.) 3. When the owners of the drove of swine at Gergesa lost their swine, what did they say to Jesus who had driven the demon from the man? (Mt. 8.28-34.) 4. What does Paul say about his scourgings in 2 Cor. 11.25? 5. What does he say in 1 Thess. 2.2 about his treatment at Philippi? 6. What did he say in his letter to the Philippians was the final result of his sufferings for Christ? (Phil. 1.12-14.) 7. How does Professor Ramsay explain the effects of the earthquake? (*Guide,* p. 251.) 8. How did Paul and Silas leave the prison? 9. What famous battle took place in the field by Philippi? (*Guide,* p. 251.) 10. What famous Roman committed suicide there?

Questions to Think About. 1. What reasons did the owners of the slave girl give for bringing in Paul and Silas before the magistrates, and what were their real reasons? 2. Whose garments were rent by whom, verse 22? 3. Why was the jailor about to kill himself? 4. How could Paul see what the jailor was about to do, since it was midnight and there were no lights? (*Guide,* ¶ 6, p. 251.) 5. Why were the rulers frightened when they learned that the prisoners were Roman citizens? (*Guide,* ¶ 3, p. 252.) 6. Why is the question the jailor asked the greatest of all questions?

Note-Book Work. In your Note-Book about the Epistles of Paul write what you know about The Epistle to the Galatians. See pp. 32, 33 of our Introduction. In your Note-Book upon "Lessons from Paul's Words", write what he wrote to the Galatians about Sowing and Reaping.

Questions upon The Acts. 1. What is the purpose of the book? 2. Was it designed to be a complete history? 3. What is the character of the book? 4. Make an outline of Acts.

LESSON XII—JUNE 18

THE PHILIPPIAN JAILOR

Golden Text

Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house. Acts 16.31

LESSON Acts 16.16-40: verses 19-34 printed MEMORIZE verses 33, 34

19 But when her masters saw that the hope of their gain was gone, they laid hold on Paul and Silas, and dragged them into the marketplace before the rulers, 20 and when they had brought them unto the magistrates, they said, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city, 21 and set forth customs which it is not lawful for us to receive, or to observe, being Romans. 22 And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent their garments off them, and commanded to beat them with rods. 23 And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely: 24 who, having received such a charge, cast them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks. 25 But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns unto God, and the prisoners were listening to them; 26 and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison-house were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened; and every one's bands were loosed. 27 And the jailor, being roused out of sleep and seeing the prison doors open, drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. 28 But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here. 29 And he called for lights and sprang in, and, trembling for fear, fell down before Paul and Silas, 30 and brought them out and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? 31 And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house. 32 And they spake the word of the Lord unto him, with all that were in his house. 33 And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, immediately. 34 And he brought them up into his house, and set food before them, and rejoiced greatly, with all his house, having believed in God.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

I. The Soothsaying Maid Exorcised, 16-18.
II. Her Angry Masters Accuse Paul and Silas before the Rulers, 19-21.
III. Paul and Silas Beaten and Imprisoned, 22-24.
IV. The Earthquake and the Conversion of the Jailor, 25-34.
V. Paul and Silas Released, 35-40.

19. *Her masters.* Read verses 16-18.—*The hope of their gain was gone.* It is interesting in this connection to recall Aristotle's remark that "many persons become poets, prophets, and sybils, and are pretty good poets while they are maniacs, but when cured can no longer write verse".—*The marketplace.* The usual seat of justice.

20. *Magistrates.* Greek, *prætors,* RVm. There were two chief magistrates in every Roman colony.—*Being Jews.* The Romans held Jews in great contempt. —*Do exceedingly trouble our city.* See ¶ 4, p. 254.

21. *Which it is not lawful for us to receive.* The Romans who believed Paul's message would be turned from their idol worship and their worship of the Emperor. "How often in the ages of our fathers was it given in charge to the magistrates, to prohibit the performance of any foreign religious rites; to banish strolling sacrificers and soothsayers from the forum, the circus, and the city; to search for, and burn, books of divination; and to abolish every mode of sacrificing that was not conformable to the Roman practice" (*Livy,* quoted by *Abbott*).

22. *Rent their garments off them.* Tore off the garments of Paul and Silas. Paul and Silas evidently were given no chance to plead their Roman citizenship.

23. *When they had laid many stripes upon them.* The professional scourgers were called Lictors; their rod consisted of a number of rods bound together, and they rained their blows upon the bare backs. Paul refers to this scourging in 2 Cor. 11.25, "Thrice was I beaten with rods". It was unlawful to scourge a Roman citizen: see verse 37, and p. 252.

24. *Made their feet fast in the stocks.* The stocks consisted of two heavy beams, one upon the other: the upper beam was lifted and after the prisoners' ankles were put across two depressions in the lower beam, it was lowered and fastened. It was impossible to draw the foot through.

25. *About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing.* "Night was the usual time for Christian worship, as we shall see at Troas (Acts 20.7), and perhaps these midnight 'lauds' represent the apostles' customary practice. See Ps. 119.62" (*Rackham*).—*Singing hymns unto God.* "Their legs in the stocks pained them not, whose souls were in heaven" (*Tertullian*).

27. *The jailor.* Compare Acts 12.19. He was perhaps a centurion like Cornelius at Cæsarea.—*Was about to kill himself.* Philippi is famous in the annals of suicide. Here Cassius, defeated, covered his face and ordered his freedmen to strike the blow with his own sword, exclaiming, "Cæsar, thou art avenged, even with the sword that killed thee". His messenger Titinius held it to be "a Roman's part" to follow the stern example. Here Brutus, "the noblest Roman of them all", killed himself by running upon his sword.—*Supposing the prisoners had escaped.* He was responsible for his prisoners, and disgrace and death would have been his punishment had they escaped. Suicide under such circumstances was regarded a Roman virtue. Rev. G. H. Morrison bids us note that the jailor never had Christians in his cells before, and he did not know how they were likely to behave. And even yet, even when Christianity is so familiar, men of the world suppose that Christians will act as they would act themselves.

28. *Do thyself no harm.* "It was midnight, and the jailor had to call for lights (verse 29); how could Paul from the inner prison see that the jailor was going to kill himself? We must understand that the inner prison was a small cell, which had no window and no opening except into the outer and larger prison, and that the outer prison had one large door in the opposite wall; then, if there was any faint starlight in the sky, still more if the moon was up, a person in the outer doorway would be distinguishable to one whose eyes were accustomed to the darkness, but the jailor would see only black darkness in the prison" (*Ramsay*).

29. *Fell down before Paul and Silas.* He saw in the earthquake the hand of God and in these two men the messengers of God.

30. *What must I do to be saved?* He had cruelly treated the messengers of God who would avenge them: what must he do to make their God his God?

33. *Washed their stripes.* At the prison fountain, or reservoir, he cleansed them from the blood caused by the beating they had received.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

26. *All the doors were opened and every one's bonds were loosed.* This seems incredible to one who thinks of doors like those in our prisons and of handcuffed prisoners. Any who have seen a Turkish prison will not wonder that the doors were thrown open: each door was merely closed by a bar, and the earthquake, as it passed along the ground, forced the doorposts apart from each other so that the bar slipped from its hold, and the door swung open. The prisoners were fastened to the wall or in wooden stocks (verse 24); and the chains and stocks were detached from the wall, which was shaken so that spaces gaped between the stones. An earthquake behaves sometimes like a playful, good-natured sprite, when it spares its full terrors. *William M. Ramsay,* in *St. Paul the Traveller.*

28. *We are all here.* Why did not the other prisoners run away when their fetters were loosed? An earthquake strikes panic into the semi-oriental mob in the Ægean lands, and it seems to me quite natural that the prisoners made no

dash for safety when the opportunity was afforded them. Moreover, they were still only partially free and they had only a moment for action. The jailor was also roused by the earthquake and came to the outer door; he was perhaps a soldier or at least had something of Roman discipline, giving him presence of mind: his call for lights brought police who helped to guard the prisoners and the opportunity was lost. *Professor Ramsay* in *St. Paul the Traveller.*

35. *The sergeants.* These were the *lictors,* the Roman officials who preceded the magistrates in public, and cleared the way for them. It was their duty to execute the punishment meted out to prisoners; they had beaten Paul and Silas the day before. Their badge of office was the fasces, an ax bound in a bundle of rods, and carried on the left shoulder.

A Lictor

37. *They have beaten us, men that are Romans.* "It is a misdeed to bind a Roman citizen—a crime to scourge him—almost parricide to put him to death", said Cicero. "In the most distant lands, even among barbarians, that cry (*Civis Romanus sum*—I am a Roman citizen) has often brought succor and safety."

38. *The magistrates feared when they heard that they were Romans.* About this time the city of Rhodes was deprived of its freedom by Claudius, because there certain Roman citizens were put to death. The authorities do not question the truth of Paul's statement; a false claim might be punished with death.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. When were the people of Jerusalem pricked in their hearts so that they said to Peter, "What shall we do"? What was Peter's answer? What was the result? When were Peter and John first imprisoned? How were they threatened before they were released? What effect had the threat upon their actions? What led to their second imprisonment? How were they freed? Who imprisoned Peter for the third time? How was he liberated? How was Paul treated at Antioch of Pisidia? At Lystra? How was Paul led to Philippi? Who were his first converts there? When Peter escaped from prison, what was the fate of the prison guards?

Paul at Philippi. Of the work at Philippi, of the converts made, of Timothy's zeal, who served with Paul as a son with a father in furthering the gospel, of Silas and Luke and Clement and Epaphroditus, of Euodia and Syntyche, those women whom Paul remembers gratefully for their labors,—of all these we get glimpses in Paul's letter to the Philippians, but of this Luke tells us nothing; instead he hastens on to narrate the event which led to Paul's expulsion from the city.

The Slave Girl of Philippi. For many days a "maid having a spirit of divination" followed Paul and his company about the streets of Philippi, crying after them "These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim unto you the way of salvation". In the margin of the Revised Version this translation is given: *a maid having a spirit, a Python.* The great dragon at Delphi slain by Apollo was called a Python, and according to Plutarch a ventriloquist was called a python in his time. Dr. Ramsay says that "God the Highest" was a wide-spread pagan expression, and "salvation" was the object of many vows and prayers to that and other gods. He further says that the slave girl's mind became distorted and diseased by her belief in her supernatural possession, but it became all the more acute in certain perceptions and intuitions, and she became at once alive to the moral influence which the intense faith of the strangers gave them. Paul in the name of Jesus Christ bade the spirit leave her. "She lost her faith in herself and with it her power." When the men who owned her, to whom her strange powers had brought great gain, found that she could no longer speak as formerly and the people no longer believed in her, they sought revenge for their loss.

Leaving Philippi. As soon as day dawned after the events recorded in our lesson text, the jailor came and told Paul that he was free to go, for the magistrates had sent word to release him. But Paul indignantly exclaimed, "Let

them come themselves and bring us out". He and Silas have been publicly beaten, they will not be privately released; they have been punished uncondemned, they will not be sent away unacquitted. Moreover, they were Roman citizens, and the magistrates had caused them to be beaten and cast into prison. Like the jailor, the magistrates had connected the earthquake with the prisoners and were alarmed at the course they had taken, but when they were told that these men were Roman citizens they knew that their violation of the law rendered them liable to death. Humbly they came and besought them eagerly to leave the city. Thus, not as fugitives from justice, but as publicly acquitted, Paul and Silas left the prison, and after tarrying awhile with the church at Lydia's home they left the city.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The scene is at Philippi, first in the prison and then in the jailor's house. See p. 236.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

"Why is it that you so readily move people to tears while I am unable to make any effect upon them"? a minister once asked a successful actor. "Because I speak fiction as though it were truth, while you speak truth as though it were fiction!" the great actor replied.

You are dealing with great truths; do you believe and therefore speak? That Philippian jailor who had heard Paul and Silas singing hymns in the night knew that their trust in God was sure, and because they so evidently believed they could speak effectively. "Do we appreciate our own message"? asks Dr. Jowett. "Do we look as though we revelled in it? There is nothing so helps a man to a good meal as to sit down with a man who enjoys a good appetite. And there is nothing so alluring to people, when we desire to show them how gracious the Lord is, as to let them see we revel in the diet. 'Blessed is the man whose delight is in the law of the Lord.' And why is he blessed? Because his delight is contagious, his enthusiasm is catching. When we see a man bubbling over and delighting in God, we ourselves begin to be unsealed."

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger and Older Pupils. In an old prison in England, in a close underground cell, a man of refinement was once kept for twenty-four hours.

The terrible silence and darkness, peopled by his fancy with hideous shapes, almost paralyzed him with fear. He felt that he was losing his reason. Then he heard footsteps overhead, and the chaplain's voice calling him by name. "I am here", the chaplain said, "and I shall not leave until you are freed". "Oh, I shall not mind it at all, now, with you so near", gratefully answered the prisoner. He could not see his friend, but he knew he was there, and the thought kept him calm throughout the long hours.

Paul and Silas are in a black, stifling inner prison at Philippi. It is midnight, but they are praying and singing hymns unto God. Their backs are cut with blows they have received, and their feet are firmly fastened in blocks of wood, but they are singing happily, for they are aware of the unseen presence of one who said, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world".

In our lesson two weeks ago Paul and Silas were by the river-side, talking to the women who had met there for prayer. What has happened to change that peaceful scene to the gloomy prison?

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Motives, Concealed and Open

The Real and the False Reasons for the Riot at Philippi. The real reason for the stirring of this riot was that these men living on the earnings of the damsel possessed with the spirit of divination suddenly found that their source of revenue was gone. It was in their pockets that they were touched. But it would never have done to have gone before the magistrate with a complaint of this kind. He would have told them that their gains were illicit. So they brought forward the high-sounding plea that these men exceedingly troubled the city, "and teach customs which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans". What splendid patriotism! What a shock to all right-thinking people the conduct of Paul and Silas was!

And yet this same struggle between the alleged and the real motive still goes on. No one ever returns to England or Scotland after a sojourn abroad without being struck and distressed by the appalling drunkenness. And yet, when temperance legislation is proposed, think of the kind of patriotic cry that is raised. "This is a blow at the liberty of the subject." "Why should the working man not have his beer?" "Better England free than England sober"; a wise Bishop said it! The real motive for the outcry is that the pockets of the liquor-sellers are touched, and the "widow and the orphan" holding brewery shares stand a chance of losing, just as they would have lost had they held Consols during the last ten years. The ostensible motive for the outcry is that England's liberties are in danger, and that the sacred right of a drunken man to knock about his wife and children is being disputed. *Dr. R. Bruce Taylor,* in *Sunday School Chronicle.*

Mixed Motives. If you were to take away from men all that religion which comes from their personal interest in it, if you were to take away from them that love of country, that desire for good government, that patriotism, which springs from, or is based upon, selfish considerations, I am afraid there would be very little operative patriotism in the country.

In our Civil War, how soon the idea of men's going into the war without money and without price died out! How soon pecuniary considerations came in! But do you suppose that because a man took a large bounty, and received regular pay in the army, he had no patriotism? He had some patriotism. But he acted from mixed motives. A man may act from strong selfish motives, from strong avaricious motives, and yet there may be mingled with these higher motives. In religion men may think their zeal is purely a matter of conscience, not stopping to consider how much that zeal depends on their standing in the church, on their social position, on the influences that surround them, and how far it is their interest to be zealous concerning particular truths of religion.

This question, then, comes up where there are mixed motives: Does the presence of the lower vitiate or destroy the higher? No. It adulterates it, but it does not destroy it. Where a man acts for a right thing from a pure motive; where a man sees the truth and follows it conscientiously, from love to God, from love to man, and from love to the truth itself, that is the highest form of conduct. But if there is a lower motive—and very few people act from

fewer than five or six motives—it is his duty to see that the lower motive is kept in its place. Almost all of our actions spring from complex motives. Our faculties are complex, and it is reasonable to suppose that our motives will be complex. But when the motives are in the main of the highest order, if a lame motive comes in, though you may not be on the highest plane, yet you may be within the bounds of righteousness. When, however, the lower motive is the strongest, and religion is merely an embellishment of that; when the animating motive—that which gives life and power—is self-interest, and conscience is used as a varnish or a cloak, then it becomes detestible, pernicious. It is what we call hypocrisy. It is acting from one motive under the pretence that the action proceeds from another motive. *Adapted* from a *Sermon* by *Henry Ward Beecher.*

II Songs in the Night

A Blacksmith's Comments. Tom Sexton was a "Blacksmith Evangelist" in the South, an ignorant man whose genuine religious experience, told over and over in the crudest language, led many, even learned doctors and lawyers, to seek and find the same Father. This is the way Tom Saxton in one of his meetings described the scene of our lesson text: "I can just imagine Paul and Silas there with their feet in the stocks and their backs all cut up and bleeding, and everything looking like it was against them, death seeming to be in front of them; and Paul says, 'Strike up a hymn, Silas'. But Silas says, 'My back's hurting me so, and they've got the stocks round my feet so tight that I can't sing'. Then Paul says, 'Well, we've got to have a hymn, if I start it up myself'." "I don't know what hymn Paul started up", continued the blacksmith, "but I believe if they knew this hymn, it would be this:

'Must Jesus bear the cross alone,
And all the world go free?
No, there's a cross for ev'ry one,
And there's a cross for me'."

The blacksmith's grammar was wrong, but his thought was right. Paul's cross was always nobly borne, and it was in the cross of Christ that he gloried.

Thomas Champness' Comments. God's nightingales sing in cages. Here were men in gaol and not only bound, but bleeding, and faint with hunger; yet they sang! And this in the dark, too! Verily, they had a fine quality of religion. Some of us never sing; though we are free, and have not been whipped, and get more than we can eat every day, yet there is no singing!

They did not sing some dreary hymn. We might have droned out, "And am I born to die"? or some such sorrowful dirge to a minor tune, but these men sang praises. They raised a psalm, which was not only listened to by the prisoners, but entered the ears of God, and brought an earthquake which brake their bands asunder. Should we not often lose our chains if we sang praises oftener? Thanksgiving honors God and gladdens men.

The Christian Sings because God is within his Soul. The Christ drew near to the close of his life with song upon his lips, in company with his faithful disciples. When all doubt of his triumph over death had been forever put aside, a song swept around the world. Paul and Silas sang it in the prison at Philippi; the churches along the Mediterranean sang it from Palestine to Spain; the martyrs sang it in their cells under the Coliseum; the persecuted sang it in the gloomy caverns of the Catacombs; the Christian missionaries sang it as they pushed on from Rome to Gaul, and from Gaul to Britain, from Britain seaward to the Western world. The tribes of American aborigines were taught to sing it across the breadth of the midland prairies and through the forests of the west. The Pacific Ocean has wafted the tide of melody onward to the lands of the rising sun. The circling chorus is well nigh complete. The day is fast approaching when "every kindred, every tribe on this terrestrial ball" shall join in ascriptions of praise to the Lord of glory. It is the love of Christ dwelling richly in the hearts of men that leads them to sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, making melody in their hearts. *Christian Advocate.*

How a Little Black Boy Learned our Lesson. His name is Ilondo, and his

age about fourteen. He was born in a village on the banks of the mighty river Congo, where a government officer and a Catholic priest lived, but few of the people had heard about Jesus. When Ilondo was about nine years old he went to a village thirty miles away and learned about Jesus from the missionaries. On his return he told other boys about him, and they went to the forest and cut sticks with which to build a "God's house". The officer arrived upon the scene. A missionary tells in *The Christian* what happened.

"What have we here"? the officer asked. "God's house, sir", said the boy timidly. "Stuff and nonsense. Pull up those sticks or there will be trouble. I'll have none of that silly work in this village".

But the boys were doing God's work. He must be honored at all costs. They went on with the building. A few days later the officer took Ilondo and four of his companions and locked them in a shed used for drying India rubber. Picture the boys in the shed, in almost complete darkness. Were they downhearted? No. In the night they prayed and sang hymns. Up started the officer in high dudgeon. Going up to the shed he told them to be quiet and let him sleep, vowing dire vengeance if they sang again.

But the boys were not daunted. Again their little voices were lifted in praise, sadly out of tune I fancy, for they had had no white teacher. This time the officer came along with his black soldier. The door was unlocked, those five little boys were stretched out on the hard ground and soundly thrashed with an awful whip made of twisted hippopotamus hide. Bleeding and sore they were then hurled back into the shed.

What followed is best given in Ilondo's own words. At a gathering of teachers and inquirers which crowded our brick chapel I put Ilondo up to speak, and roughly this is what he said:

"My friends, our God is a great God, and he always answers prayer. Let us never forget that. After we were thrashed and thrown back into the prison, what did we do? My companions cried bitterly, but I knew God would help us. So I told them that when I was up here learning to read I heard our missionary tell a story of two men who long, long ago preached the gospel in a strange town, and they were thrashed and thrown into prison. But they sang and prayed, and God shook the prison and opened the doors. Then I said: 'Let us sing and pray'. So my companions dried their tears and we sang and prayed. Soon we heard the key in the lock, and the officer sent in the black soldier, and he took us one by one and kicked us out, saying, 'Here, get out of this with your singing'."

As the missionaries looked into the glowing face of the brave lad, and saw his simple, triumphant faith, they said to each other: "God forgive us that we have not had faith enough to recognize his answers to our prayers when he sent them".

Ilondo's schoolhouse is up. It has a flourishing Christian Endeavor Society, a large number of inquirers, and seven have been baptized on confession of faith.

III The Greatest of Questions

How Paul Answered the Question. "What must I do"? asked the jailer. "It had been not unnatural to say, 'First of all, let us out of prison'," answers Mr. C. Silvester Horne. "'Play the man, run the risk, keep a higher law than you break, obey a holier duty than this low one, and bear the penalty. Act, do!' But instead the evangelist began deeper down. 'Believe', he cries. This is his appeal to the soul. His own condition affected him not at all in comparison with the condition of this awakening spirit struggling in the dark towards duty and light and peace. Whether he was to be set at liberty was a matter of insignificance compared with the urgency that this jailor should be set at liberty to become a man and a Christian."

The Only Answer. Philosophy cannot answer this question; science cannot. But there is an answer: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved". There is only one way to come to Christ—that is, with a broken and a contrite heart. "He that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life." If you take that verse and live by it, I will answer for you at the judgment, no matter what may have been your past life. *Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman.*

"How the Jailer at Philippi Was Caught." One night in St. Louis Mr. Dwight L. Moody preached on the Philippian jailer, and the next morning the Globe-Democrat reported the sermon under a sensational headline—"How the Jailer at Philippi Was Caught". A copy of the paper was carried into the city jail and fell into the hands of a notorious prisoner named Valentine Burke. The result I condense from Mr. Moody's words.

This man was one of the worst characters known to the St. Louis police. He was about forty years old at that time, had spent about twenty years in jail, and was then awaiting trial on another serious charge. As Burke glanced over the morning paper the headline caught his eye. Thinking that it was some jail news, he began to read it. He was so anxious to see how the jailer was caught. He thought he had once passed through a town called Philippi, in Illinois, and supposed this was the place referred to.

Every now and then he came across the words, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved". That text was quoted nine times in the sermon.

Burke wondered what had happened to the Globe-Democrat, and looked at the date. It was that morning's paper all right. He was disgusted, but he could not shake off that text—"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved". God used it to convict him, and a sense of his responsibility before God rushed upon him. There in his cell at midnight he prayed for the first time in his life. On the following Sunday he talked with the Christian friends who held service in the jail, and was led into the light of the gospel.

From that night Burke was a changed man. For some months after his release he tried to find work, but no one would take him, knowing his past history. He went to New York but was unsuccessful and returned to St. Louis. One day Burke received a message from the sheriff that he was wanted at the court house. He obeyed with a heavy heart. "Some old case they've got against me", he said; "but if I'm guilty I'll tell them so. I've done lying".

The sheriff greeted him kindly. "Where have you been, Burke?" "In New York." "What have you been doing there?" "Trying to find an honest job." "Have you kept a good grip on the religion you told me about?" inquired the sheriff. "Yes", answered Burke; "I've had a hard time, Sheriff, but I haven't lost my religion".

"Burke", said the sheriff, "I have had you shadowed ever since you left jail. I suspected your religion was a fraud. But I am convinced that you are sincere, as you've lived an honest life, and I have sent for you to offer you a deputyship under me. You can begin at once."

This incident shows what the grace of God can do for a hardened sinner. Not only can it save him, but it can keep him. Valentine Burke lived an active, consistent Christian life in the position until God called him home in 1895.

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

A wise question is already half the answer, said Francis Bacon. Have you asked the wisest—because the most important—of all questions, "What must I do to be saved"?

"Where now are the joyous Christians, the midnight-singing Christians?" questions Dr. Parker. We are not beaten and imprisoned for our faith, but do we meet with song even the unusual or the uncomfortable?

Our Prayer. O thou who didst inspire Paul's song, when bleeding and sore he lay in that inner prison, give us courage to face our lesser troubles bravely and cheerfully. By our smiling cheer, help us to declare that our faith is strong enough to trust the love of God at all times, and may all our actions prove that we believe in thee, Lord Jesus, as our Savior.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The greatest question. See the Third Topic; Chapter XVII in "Revival Sermons" by Dr. Chapman.
2. Minors in street trades in our cities.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Note-Book Work. Write Chapter VII, At Philippi.

THE PHILIPPIAN CHRISTIANS—REVIEW

Golden Text

Finally brethren, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Philippians 4.8

READING LESSON Philippians 1.1-11; 4.1-9

A GENERAL REVIEW OF ACTS IX-XVI

See directions on page 148.

Lesson I. Saul, the Pharisee at whose feet the witnesses against Stephen had laid their garments, had zealously persecuted the Christians at Jerusalem, and driven them from the city. Armed with letters from the high priest, he started for Damascus in their pursuit, purposing to bring many back to Jerusalem as prisoners. On the way a wonderful event took place. A sudden, blinding light and a voice from heaven convinced him that Jesus is the Christ, and that in persecuting his followers, he was persecuting the Saviour. He was led by the hand into the city, for he had arisen from the vision totally blind. After three days of darkness, Ananias, who had been divinely sent to him, came and laid his hands on him, bidding him in the name of the Christ receive his sight. Immediately his sight was restored and he was baptized as a humble follower of the lowly Nazarene whom he had persecuted.

After his conversion, Saul spent three years in Arabia. He preached in the synagogues of Damascus till he was obliged to flee because the Jews sought to kill him. As the gates of the city were watched, his friends let him down over the wall in a basket. At Jerusalem he sought to join the disciples, but they were afraid of him until Barnabas assured them that he was no longer the persecutor but a fellow-Christian. At Jerusalem, too, the Jews sought to kill him, but he made his escape to Cæsarea and went to Tarsus, his native town, in Cilicia.

Lesson II. The conversion of Saul brought peace to the church throughout Judea and Galilee and Samaria. At Lydda Peter in the name of Jesus Christ restored to strength Æneas, a man who had been palsied eight years. When Dorcas, a woman renowned for her good works, died at Joppa Peter was sent for, and he restored her to life. The miracle became known and caused many to believe on the Lord.

Lesson III. There was a centurion at Cæsarea who was a God-fearing Gentile, but he needed instruction in regard to Jesus the Christ. He was led by a vision to send to Joppa for Peter, and Peter was prepared for the summons by a vision that came to him on the housetop at the home of Simon the tanner, where he had gone to pray. A receptacle filled with all kinds of beasts and birds and creeping things, seemingly like a sheet held up at the four corners, was let down from heaven three times before him, and he was told to kill and eat. He recoiled at the thought of eating anything Levitically unclean, but he heard a voice saying, "What God hath cleansed, make not thou common". While Peter was pondering on the vision, the messengers from Cornelius were announced, and he was divinely directed to go with them, for they were sent by the Spirit. Peter returned with them and proclaimed to Cornelius the Gentile and his household Jesus the Christ, for his vision on the housetop had taught Peter that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is acceptable to him. While he was preaching the Holy Spirit fell on all that heard him, and Peter had them baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

On Peter's return to Jerusalem the other apostles objected to his course, but they were convinced by his report that it was God's purpose to grant repentance unto the Gentiles also.

Lesson V. In those days Herod the King, in order to gain favor with the leading Jews, had James, the brother of John, put to death, and Peter imprisoned till after the Passover. The church prayed earnestly for Peter's release. Although he was chained to two soldiers and two guards were on the watch, yet when the day came on which Herod intended to put him to death, he was not to be found, for he had been strangely freed. An angel had loosed his chains and led him forth. Peter went at once to the house of Mary, the mother of John Mark, where the disciples were praying for him. Rhoda, the maid who answered his knock, was too surprised at first to let him in. After telling them all how he had escaped, he sought a place where he would be safe from Herod.

Herod ordered the guards of the prison put to death, and not long afterwards he himself died from a loathsome disease. Meanwhile "the word of God grew and multiplied".

Lesson VI. Certain Jews, natives of Cyprus and Cyrene, who were driven from Jerusalem by the persecution that followed the stoning of Stephen, went to Antioch in Syria and proclaimed to the Gentiles there that Jesus is the Christ, and many of them believed. A new name was given to Christ's followers here at Antioch, a name that included both Jews and Gentiles, that of Christians. When the report of the reception of Gentiles into Christian fellowship reached the church at Jerusalem, Barnabas was sent to Antioch to learn the situation. Finding that the will of God was evidently being fulfilled, Barnabas rejoiced and exhorted them all to remain steadfast in their loyalty to Christ. He went to Tarsus for Saul, and brought him back to help in the work. After a year of teaching there the two workers went to Jerusalem with funds sent by the new church in Antioch to their brothers in need, and when they returned to Antioch they brought a third helper with them, John Mark. Among the prophets and teachers at Antioch, Barnabas and Saul were divinely chosen for work elsewhere. After fasting and praying and laying on of hands, the little Christian community sent these two on their way, on the first missionary journey, as we call it.

With John Mark they set sail from the port of Seleucia and went to Cyprus. They preached at Salamis and then crossed the island to Paphos. There the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, desired to hear the word of God, but Elymas, the sorcerer, endeavored to dissuade him from accepting Christ. Saul, who is now and henceforth called Paul, addressed Elymas as the enemy of all righteousness, and told him that the hand of the Lord was upon him, and he should be blind for a season. Elymas was immediately stricken blind, and had to be led by the hand. The miracle led the proconsul to believe the teaching of the Lord.

Lesson VII. From Paphos the missionaries sailed to Perga in Pamphylia, and there John Mark left them. The others went on to Antioch of Pisidia. On the Sabbath the rulers of the synagogue requested them to speak, and Paul addressed the company. He referred to Israel's past history, told them that Jesus the Saviour was a descendant of David, that John the Baptist had announced him, that the Jews at Jerusalem had crucified him, and that God had raised him from the dead and he had been afterwards seen by many witnesses. He told them that he had brought them good tidings; through this Jesus he proclaimed unto them remission of sins, by whom every one that believes is justified; and he urged them not to neglect so great a salvation. Paul was asked to speak again the next Sabbath. During the week many came to him for instruction, and on the next Sabbath a great multitude met to hear the word of God. The jealousy of the Jews was aroused, and they contradicted and reviled Paul till he boldly declared that they had refused the word of God, judging themselves unworthy of eternal life, and he should now turn to the Gentiles. Then he quoted from Isaiah, "I have set thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation to the uttermost part of the earth". The Gentiles rejoiced and glorified God, and the word of the Lord spread throughout all the region. The chief women of Antioch, however, urged on by the Jews, and the chief men of the city aroused such hostility to Paul and Barnabas that they forced them to leave and go to Iconium.

In the synagogue at Iconium they taught and many, both of the Jews and the Greeks, believed their message, but again the Jews stirred up the

people against them, and when they learned of a plot to stone them they fled to the region of Lycaonia, Lystra and Derbe.

Lesson VIII. Through Paul a cripple at Lystra was enabled to walk, and the people thought that Paul and Barnabas must be gods. They wished to offer sacrifice to them as to Jupiter and Mercury, but Paul prevented this, telling them that he was human like themselves. Then he sought to turn them from their false gods to the true God who had shown himself to them in the gifts of nature. The people were persuaded by the hostile Jews who had come to Lystra from Antioch and Iconium, to persecute Paul, and after stoning him they dragged his supposedly dead body without the city walls. But Paul revived and entered the city for the night, and on the morrow went with Barnabas to Derbe.

On their return journey to Antioch in Syria they stopped at Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch of Pisidia, exhorting the disciples to remain steadfast in the faith, and organizing their churches. Continuing their journey they went to Perga and then to Attalia, where they took ship for Antioch in Syria. To the church there they told all that God had done through them, and that he had opened a door of faith unto the Gentiles.

Lesson IX. The rejoicing at Antioch was disturbed by certain Pharisees who came from Jerusalem and declared that the Gentiles could not be saved unless they first became Jews by receiving the rite of circumcision. Paul and Barnabas were sent with others to Jerusalem to confer with the church there. After long discussions, and after Peter had declared that God in his dealings with the Gentiles had made no distinction between them and the Jews, and Paul had told of the wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles through him and Barnabas, and James had strengthened Peter's argument by an appeal to prophecy, the whole church agreed to the expressed judgment of James, that the Gentiles should abstain from four things repugnant to the Jews and should not be troubled further. An official letter was written, condemning the Pharisees who had stirred up the trouble, commending Paul and Barnabas, and giving the decision. The letter was carried to Antioch by two men appointed for the service, and it caused great rejoicing in the church. Paul and Barnabas returned with them to Antioch.

After tarrying awhile in Antioch following their visit to Jerusalem and conference with the church there, Paul and Barnabas decided to revisit the churches they had founded on their first missionary journey. Barnabas wished to take Mark with them, but Paul objected because he had withdrawn from the work on the previous journey. They agreed to separate, Barnabas going with Mark to Cyprus, and Paul with Silas to the cities in Syria and Cilicia and then on to Derbe and Lystra. At Lystra, Timothy joined them.

Lesson X. Going through the region of Phrygia and Galatia they reached the border of Mysia. Learning that it was not the divine will that they should preach the word either in the province of Asia or of Bithynia, they passed on to Troas on the coast. There in a vision at night a man of Macedonia besought Paul to come over into Macedonia and help them. Obedient to the vision, they sailed across to Neapolis and then went a few miles inland to Philippi. On the Sabbath they went to the riverside, where several women were met for prayer; among those who believed Paul's message to them were Lydia and her household, who were baptized. At her urgent request Paul made her house his home.

For many days a soothsaying maid at Philippi followed Paul and his company, declaring that they were the servants of the Most High God. She was dispossessed of her soothsaying powers and no longer able to bring her masters gain.

Lesson XII. They were greatly angered and haled Paul and Silas before the magistrates on the charge of troubling the city and setting up customs not lawful for Romans to follow. The magistrates ordered Paul and Silas beaten and imprisoned. The jailor put them in the inner prison and made their feet fast in the stocks. Suffering as they were, Paul and Silas could yet bravely pray and sing hymns. At midnight, as if in answer to their need, an earthquake threw open the prison doors and loosed their bands. The affrighted jailor was kept from killing himself by Paul's assurance that his prisoners had not escaped, and was led by Paul's words to believe in Jesus as his Saviour. The

GOLDEN TEXT FOR THE QUARTER
Whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; ....think on these things. Phil. 4.8
He is Risen
Come over and help us
The Church at Antioch
CALLED CHRISTIANS AT ANTIOCH
TURNING TO THE GENTILES
SOWING AND REAPING
I
II
III
IV
V
VI
VII
VIII
IX
X
XI
XII

magistrates, too, were terrified by the earthquake, and in the morning they ordered the release of the prisoners. When they received Paul's message that they had beaten and imprisoned uncondemned Roman citizens they came and humbly besought Paul and Silas to depart. After visiting Lydia's home and cheering the disciples there, they left Philippi.

A REVIEW BY MEANS OF ALLUSIONS

See directions on page 150.

The man of the Macedonian cry, garbed like a miner, seems to be standing today on the apex of the Tower of Jewels at San Francisco, beckoning to God's latest Man with a Message to hit the old trail of the Forty-niners across the Rockies. *Howard A. Banks.*

True service lies not in the magnitude of the deed but in the spirit of the doer. A true follower of Jesus is full of good works.

> Self is the only prison that can ever bind the soul;
> Love is the only angel who can bid the gates unroll. *Van Dyke.*

At any moment Saul may come to his crisis and the new Paul be born. For our Gospel is not the survival of the fit but the revival of the unfit. *C. Silvester Horn.*

Hitherto Christianity had imagined that men could only approach it through the gate of the temple, but at Antioch it discovered that the gate of the temple was only one of a multitude of avenues. *Dr. Matheson.*

"The anniversary of my precious Theodora's decease fell this year on Easter Eve, that beautiful, calm festival in the true sense, when the grave was consecrated by him who is become the first fruits of them that sleep."

We are daily judging ourselves unworthy of divine grace in every act of refusal to accept and rely on it. *Dr. Abbott.*

Every day give us courage and hope and some song of rejoicing. Though the prison be closed around us, and the guards be set over us, may we sing songs in the night, and find an angel of deliverance. *Henry Ward Beecher.*

The world has often had its dreams of gods who had come down in the likeness of men, and even of a Divine influence pervading all things; but no ethnic religion has told how men may come to God. *H. E. Fox.*

> "Why dost thou persecute me, Saul of Tarsus?"
> All night long these words were ringing in mine ears!
> *Longfellow.*

A PICTURE REVIEW

Before class time have the pictures on the last page copied upon your blackboard. Each picture may be covered with a piece of paper attached at the top by paste so that it can be quickly removed. Tear off one paper at a time, and question your pupils about the lesson which the picture recalls.

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER PUPILS

1. What happened on the road to Damascus? 2. Who came to Paul while he was blind and what did he tell Paul? 3. Why did many grieve when Dorcas died? 4. Who came and restored her to life? 5. What did Peter see in a vision? 6. What did he then learn? 7. What did the vision lead Peter to do? 8. Which apostle did Herod kill? 9. Which one did he imprison? 10. How did that one escape? 11. In what city were the disciples first called Christians? 12. Who was sent to them from Jerusalem? 13. Whom did he get to help him? 14. Where did Paul first go on his first missionary journey? 15. What miracle was wrought at Lystra? 16. What did the people think Paul and Barnabas were? 17. What did Paul tell them? 18. What vision did Paul have at Troas? 19. What were Paul and Silas doing in prison at midnight? 21. What happened?

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR OLDER PUPILS

1. What led to Paul's conversion? 2. What city was the starting-point for Paul's journeys? 3. Name the places in their order as visited by Paul on his first missionary journey. 4. What opposition did he meet? 5. What successes did he win? 6. What was Paul's belief as to God's relation to the Gentiles? 7. Where was the policy of preaching to the Gentiles inaugurated? 8. Where did

Paul make his first recorded public speech, and what was its effect? 9. What was the first great controversy which disturbed the Christian church? 10. What great experience came to Peter on a housetop at Joppa and what was its lesson? 11. Draw an outline map of Paul's first missionary journey. 12. What can you tell about Joppa? 13. Antioch in Syria? 14. Antioch in Pisidia? 15. Lystra? 16. Philippi? 17. What can you tell about the Galatians? 18. The Acts?

A REVIEW OF VERSES

Repeat (or write) the verse which:—

1. Begins, But by the grace. 2. Begins, Bear ye. 3. Says that God is not mocked. 4. Tells who is acceptable to God. 5. Bids one be a light. 6. Speaks about not wearying in well-doing. 7. Tells where the name of Christian was first used. 8. Refers to God as the Creator. 9. Refers to God as a Giver of good gifts. 10. Says something about deceiving oneself about oneself. 11. Speaks of Bithynia. 12. Contains a call for help. 13. Answers the question, "What must I do to be saved?"

A REVIEW CONTEST

See directions on page 153.

1. To what city was Saul going when he saw a great light? 2. What book in the Bible comes just before First Corinthians? 3. Name the woman who was restored to life through Peter. 4. Name the man who said to Saul, "Brother Saul, receive thy sight". 5. Which apostle was the first to suffer martyrdom? 6. By whom was he put to death? 7. Who was the first convert in Europe? 8. Who said, "Who art thou, Lord"? 9. What book does Galatians follow?

SUBJECTS FOR ESSAYS

1. Peter's vision at Joppa and its significance. 2. Paul as a boy and young man. 3. Paul as a Pharisee. 4. The story of Paul's First Missionary Journey. 5. Antioch, the Paris of Syria. 6. An appreciation of Barnabas. 7. An appreciation of Cornelius. 8. Write as if to one who has never heard about Christianity and tell him when this name was first given and who is a Christian.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. Who are *they,* first verse? 2. Along what great Roman road did they travel? (*Guide,* p. 266.) 3. What can you learn about Thessalonica? (*Guide,* p. 266.) 4. To what country does Salonica (ancient Thessalonica) now belong? 5. How far was it from Philippi to Thessalonica? 6. Where was Berœa? 7. What two facts did Paul teach in the synagogue at Thessalonica? 8. What proof from an inscription has been found as to the accuracy of Luke in his account of local conditions? 9. What did Paul say in 1 Thess. 2.13 about the way his message was received at Thessalonica? 10. How was Paul supported while at Thessalonica? (1 Th. 2.9-11; 2 Th. 3.7-10; Phil. 4.15, 16.) 11. What was the charge made against Jesus which verse 7 recalls? (Jn. 19.12.) 12. What did Jesus say to the hostile Jews about their searching the scriptures? (Jn. 5.39.)

Questions to Think About. 1. Why did Paul speak first to the Jews in the synagogue? 2. What was the main point of Paul's preaching? 3. How did his method of preaching at Thessalonica, where many of his hearers were Gentiles, differ from his method at Antioch? 4. Why did Paul always refer to the sufferings of Jesus when speaking to the Jews? 5. What does "he reasoned with them from the Scriptures" mean? (*Guide,* p. 265.) 6. What does "opening and alleging" mean? (*Guide,* p. 265. 7. What does *behooved* mean? 8. What does *consorted* mean? 9. What does "have turned the world upside down" mean? 10. What may have given rise to the charge made in verse 7? (*Guide,* p. 265.) 11. What does verse 9 mean? (*Guide,* p. 265.) 12. Where before have we heard of Jews following Paul from one city to another to stir up trouble for him? 13. Why does Luke call the Berœans more noble than the Thessalonians? 14. How often do you examine the Scriptures? 15. What is the best way in which to examine the Scriptures?

THIRD QUARTER

LESSON I—JULY 2

PAUL AT THESSALONICA AND BERŒA

Golden Text

Him did God exalt with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour. Acts 5.31

LESSON Acts 17.1-15; (compare 1 Thessalonians 2.1-12)
MEMORIZE verses 11, 12

1 Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews; 2 and Paul, as his custom was, went in unto them, and for three sabbath days reasoned with them from the scriptures, 3 opening and alleging that it behooved the Christ to suffer, and to rise again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom, *said he,* I proclaim unto you, is the Christ. 4 And some of them were persuaded, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few. 5 But the Jews, being moved with jealousy, took unto them certain vile fellows of the rabble, and gathering a crowd, set the city on an uproar; and assaulting the house of Jason, they sought to bring them forth to the people. 6 And when they found them not, they dragged Jason and certain brethren before the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also; 7 whom Jason hath received: and these all act contrary to the decrees of Cæsar, saying that there is another king, *one* Jesus. 8 And they troubled the multitude and the rulers of the city, when they heard these things. 9. And when they had taken security from Jason and the rest, they let them go.

10 And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berœa: who when they were come thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. 11 Now these were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, examining the scriptures daily, whether these things were so. 12 Many of them therefore believed; also of the Greek women of honorable estate, and of men, not a few. 13 But when the Jews of Thessalonica had knowledge that the word of God was proclaimed of Paul at Berœa also, they came thither likewise, stirring up and troubling the multitudes. 14 And then immediately the brethren set forth Paul to go as far as to the sea: and Silas and Timothy abode there still. 15 But they that conducted Paul brought him as far as Athens: and receiving a commandment unto Silas and Timothy that they should come to him with all speed, they departed.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

I. Paul at Thessalonica, 1-9.
  1. On the Way, 1.
  2. Preaching, 2-3.
  3. Results of the Preaching, 4-9.
II. At Berœa, 10-13.
III. On the Way to Athens, 14-15.

1. *When they.* See Acts 15.40; 16.1, 3.—*Amphipolis.* "Here Paulus Æmilius after the battle of Pydna publicly declared that the Macedonians should be free, and now another Paulus was here, whose message to the Macedonians was the proclamation of a better liberty" (*Conybeare and Howson*).

2. *For three sabbath days. Weeks,* RVm. From First Thessalonians we learn that Paul must have been in Thessalonica more than three weeks. His mission to the Jews may have lasted but three weeks, and then he turned to the Gentiles

and taught them for three or four months.—*Reasoned with them from the scriptures.* He cited scripture passages prophetic of the Christ: he then showed that Jesus fulfilled these words, and thus reasoned, or argued, that Jesus is the Christ, verse 3. Arnot explains the work of Paul by a good figure of speech: "The Jews were like little children who had a tree in their garden, their father's legacy. The children had gathered the nuts as they grew, and laid them up with reverence in a storehouse; but they knew not how to break open the shell and so get the meat out of the nuts. Paul broke the shell, opened out the kernel, and presented it as food to the hungry."

3. *Opening and alleging.* He opened the scriptures (as Jesus did on the walk to Emmaus, Lk. 27.32) by alleging, that is, bringing forward as evidence (as is the original meaning of this Greek verb παρατιθέμενος) the agreement of Jesus' life with the passages quoted.—*Behooved.* Befitted.—*The Christ.* The Messiah.

4. *Some of them.* Some of the Jews.—*Consorted.* From *con,* with, and *sors,* lot, fate. They cast their lot with Paul and Silas, shared their way of life.—*Devout Greeks.* Jewish proselytes, or at least Greeks who attended the synagogue and worshipped God. There were many Gentiles in the church at Thessalonica, 1 Thess. 1.5-10.

5. *Certain vile fellows of the rabble.* The Greek word ἀγοραῖοι, translated *rabble,* comes from the word ἀγορα, *market-place;* they were men of the market-place, a crowd of market loafers; idlers who had no business of their own, and were ready for any excitement or mischief that might turn up.—*Set the city on an uproar.* "It is with narrow-souled people as with narrow-necked bottles: the less they have in them, the more noise they make in pouring it out" (*Pope*).—*They sought to bring them forth.* It was at Jason's home that Paul and Silas lived. Jason is probably the Jason mentioned in Rom. 16.21.

6. *Before the rulers of the city.* The Greek word translated rulers is πολιτάρχας, *politarchs.* Because the title is not found in classical literature, it was long held that Luke was inaccurate here. But across the main street Octavius had erected a triumphal arch, doubtless in commemoration of the victory at Philippi over the Republican leaders, and on the foundations have been found inscribed the names of the city magistrates with the title Politarch. A block with the word upon it is now in the British Museum.—*Have turned the world upside down. The inhabited earth,* RVm. The exaggeration is the language of passionate excitement, but it bears testimony, nevertheless, to the success of Paul's missions. "Christianity is radical, revolutionary, re-constructive" (*Parkhurst*).

7. *There is another king.* To proclaim "another king" was rank treason, and the penalty was death. Compare the charge made against Jesus, Jn. 19.12. From his Epistle to the Thessalonians we know that Paul spoke often about "the Kingdom of God" and of the second coming of Christ, and this may have given rise to the charge. This verse shows the democratic character of this "free" Roman city.

9. *When they had taken security from Jason and the rest.* "To prevent the repetition of such scenes, Jason and his friends were bound over to keep the peace and required to give security to that effect. This was quite in accordance with Roman law. It may be compared with the action of some English magistrates in forbidding processions of the Salvation Army because of the riots that followed, although they knew that the Salvationists themselves were not disturbers of the peace" (*Adeney*). "In our own anti-slavery time it was not supposed that Isaiah Rynders and the mob disturbed the peace of New York; it was Wendell Phillips and William Lloyd Garrison and Henry Ward Beecher. So the attempt was made, not to quell the mob, but to silence the speakers" (*Abbott*).

11. *These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that,* etc. The Greek word εὐγενέστεροι, translated *more noble,* means literally *of more noble birth.* In contrast with the rioting and violence of certain Thessalonian Jews, from whom Paul had just escaped, the Bereans showed their better birth by the way in which they received the evangelists, and they were, moreover, not prejudiced against Paul's message before hearing it, but listened to what he said about the prophecies concerning Jesus and then turned to the scriptures to see if "these things"—Paul's statements—were true.

13. *They came thither likewise, stirring up and troubling the multitudes.*

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Recall how the Jews of Antioch had followed Paul to Iconium to stir up the people there, Acts 14.19.

14. *As far as to the sea.* He could sail for Athens from the port of Dium.

15. *That they should come to him with all speed.* See 1 Thess. 3.1, 2, where it appears that Timothy was sent back at once to Thessalonica to reassure the disciples there.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

2. *Paul reasoned with them from the scriptures.* In the synagogues of the East teaching was the method of instruction, and the Christian evangelists accordingly taught and preached the word. But in the more critical atmosphere of the West dogmatic assertion was not sufficient, and Paul had to adopt the method of reasoning, in which he was an adept. The reasoning, of course, was Jewish; it was based on the scriptures. But until they recognized the Christ in them, the scriptures were a sealed book to the Jews. *R. B. Rackham.*

5. *They sought to bring them forth to the people.* Thessalonica had been made a free city by Augustus, and was entirely independent. *The people,* as in all ancient Greek cities, were the supreme authority. Hence the apostles were to be dragged before the popular assembly. *J. M. Lindsay.*

12. *Greek women of honorable estate.* In Macedonia, as in Asia Minor, women occupied a much freer and more influential position than in Athens. Men of all classes were impressed by the teaching of Paul, but only women of the leading families; and the difference is obviously due to the fact that the poorer women were most likely to be under the sway of superstition. *W. M. Ramsay.*

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. Who were Paul's persecutors at Antioch of Pisidia? Who stirred up the people against him at Iconium, and what did they attempt to do? From what cities did Jews follow Paul to Lystra to stir up trouble for him? What did they do to him there? How was Paul led to enter Europe? To what city did he first go? In what province? Who was his first convert there? Who had him beaten and imprisoned? Who was the next believer? Who is the first Gentile about whom we have heard who searched the Scriptures? Who helped him to search them to the right purpose?

From Philippi to Thessalonica. "Having suffered before and been shamefully treated, as ye know, at Philippi, we waxed bold in our God to speak with you the gospel of God", wrote Paul in his first letter to the Thessalonians. From the prison in Philippi, after a visit to the brethren at Lydia's house, Paul and Silas went on to Thessalonica, for though their backs were still smarting from the cruel scourges received at Philippi, they never dreamed of giving up their work. Several months must have been spent at Thessalonica, for while there the Philippians sent contributions twice to Paul (Phil. 4.16), and his letters to the Thessalonians show that his stay must have been prolonged. The majority in the church which he founded there were Gentiles, to whom his gospel "came not in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit, and in much assurance."

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The Egnatian Way, a great Roman road seven hundred miles long, led from the Hellespont (the Dardanelles) to the Adriatic at Dyrrachium. Paul traversed this road from Philippi to Thessalonica, passing through Amphipolis and Apollonia, two cities which divided the total distance of about one hundred miles into three nearly equal journeys.

Thessalonica was the capital of the province of Macedonia. Its situation at the head of the Thermaic Gulf made it a great commercial city, and Jews had settled there in great numbers. It lay within sight of Mount Olympus, the fabled home of Zeus and other Grecian deities.

In spite of much persecution, Paul succeeded in founding a very flourishing church here, from which Christianity spread throughout the neighborhood. In the ninth century the gospel was carried from this city into Central Europe,

to the Slavonians and Bulgarians and Moravians, so this church of Paul's might be called the father of the wonderful Moravian missions of our time! The prosperous city of today is known by its abbreviated name of Saloniki or Salonica. Three centuries ago many thousand Jews, who had fled from persecution in Spain and Portugal, settled here, and now seemingly every other person one meets here is a Jew.

Berœa lay off the Egnatian Way, and Cicero accordingly refers to it as an out-of-the-way place. It is about forty miles southeast of Salonica, and is still a flourishing town known as Veria.

From Berœa Paul went with his escort to Dium, the port of Berœa, and thence southward by boat (or on foot along the shore) to Athens, in the province of Achaia. See p. 283.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

From "The Bible and Modern Life" (*C. S. Cooper*) comes our message today. In some way we must get men interested in the Bible. This task, like other important tasks, is not easy. How many leaders have really tried to enlist men in the study of this Book? The interesting of men in the Bible involves able and courageous leadership, the study of methods, Bible courses and literature, business ability, money, sacrifice, patience, and, beneath all, an unquenchable conviction that God's revelation in his Word is eternally worth while. The Church needs able, broad-minded, godly men to teach the Bible in men's Bible classes. To popularize and dignify the Bible in the hearts of young men is one of the church's opportunities in this generation. The Bible class is for the sake of Bible study; Bible study is not for the sake of the Bible class. The class hour should arouse men to a new interest in the Bible, and to the formation of a habit of permanent Bible study. It will rarely do this if the men attend simply to listen to a sermonette on a particular passage.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. From Philippi Paul went on to Thessalonica. (Have the places named in the first verse located on the map.) As travelers walk along the streets of Salonica (ancient Thessalonica) today they hear the creaking and straining of hand-looms, and they are reminded of the time when Paul sat and worked at such a loom. Today the goat's hair is spun into coarse thread by the women and children at their cottage doors, and then carried to the looms where it is woven into a thick, harsh cloth. Paul made cloth for tents, for that was his trade, so that he might earn money for his support. In his letter to the Thessalonians he says: "Ye remember our labor and travail: working night and day, that we might not burden any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God." What was the theme of his sermons?

For Older Pupils. In a luxurious home of Thessalonica about one hundred years before Paul came to Jason's home there, a guest sat writing letters. He was the author of books that are read to-day, which in classic Latin tell us how to endure calmly all the ills that may befall us, how to trust our friends, how to grow old gracefully. He was among devoted friends whose wealth was at his disposal. But some of the ills of life had come to him. His office had been taken from him, part of his wealth was gone, the people no longer flattered him, and he was banished from Rome. How did he bear these troubles, he who could so well tell others how theirs should be borne? He had been walking the floor, wringing his hands and sobbing, he writes; there is no hope left for him. "If you saw me, you would not see me", is the translation of the words his pen was tracing, "You would not see even a trace of me, not a shadow, but the image of a breathing corpse. Would that before this you had seen me dead!" Those of you who have studied Latin recognize in this weak man Marcus Tullius Cicero, one of the most celebrated orators of all the ages.

"Show me some one person formed according to the principles he professes", exclaimed Epictetus; "show me one who is sick and happy; disgraced and happy". Such an one was our hero Paul. Like Cicero he was an exile from home, self-exiled for the love of the gospel he was proclaiming; like him, too, he was poor, so poor that he gladly received contributions from his friends at Philippi; like him, too, he was a guest in a friend's home at Thessalonica,

but, unlike him, he labored with his own hands for his support; and instead of having every wish supplied, he was persecuted and driven from the city. Cicero knew how ills should be borne, but could not bear them; Paul bore them triumphantly. Every effort to silence him but resulted in stirring him on to even greater zeal, if possible.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Turning the World Upside Down

Triumph of the Gospel. What a tribute it was to the work of Paul and Silas when those Jews haled Jason before the rulers of the city with the accusation that they had "turned the world upside down"! And what an unconscious acknowledgment it was of the power of the gospel proclaimed by these messengers!

It *is* the office of Christianity to turn the world upside down in the sense of changing it, transforming it. As some one has well said, the effect of Christianity is "not a Matthew ceasing to be a mercenary publican, but a Matthew transformed into an inspired disciple and an efficient helper of the world's good; not a Paul no longer persecuting the church, but a Paul become a mighty and unceasing upbuilder of Christianity".

Wherever the gospel is preached this is the result, old customs give place to new, the life is wholly changed. When Alexander Mackay went to Uganda he found the natives in the habit of offering human victims to propitiate the evil spirits, and when Suma their king died two thousand men were killed that he might not go into the other world unattended. When Mtesa, that king's son and successor died, not one life was sacrificed. Christianity had turned their superstitions and cruel practices upside down.

The testimony borne by Sir Bartle Frere while governor of Bombay as to the effects there of Christianity is most convincing: "I speak simply as to matter of experience and observation, just as a Roman prefect might have reported to Trajan, and I assure you that the teachings of Christianity among one hundred and sixty millions of civilized, industrious Hindus and Mohammedans in India are effecting changes moral, social and political which, for extent and rapidity of effect, are far more extraordinary than anything you or your fathers have witnessed in modern Europe".

A Forceful Sermon on this Text. There is food for thought in the sermon which one of Wesley's followers preached from this text. This is his outline. "First, the world is wrong way up; second, it has got to be turned upside down; third, we's the chaps to do it."

There is Much yet to be Done before the Evolution of Christianity is Complete. Christianity is turning the world upside down, and will not cease so to do until the world is right-side up. That all service is honorable and all idleness is a disgrace; that to get money by whatever strategy without furnishing an equivalent is a dishonorable spoliation; that wealth is a trust, and that men are to be measured, not by what they possess, but by what use they make of it; that things are for men, not men for things, and that any civilization is wasteful which grinds up men and women to make cheap goods; that industry is not righteously organized until it is so organized that every honest and willing worker can find work, and find work so remunerative as to give him and his children an opportunity for self-development as well as for mere life—these are some of the axioms of the Christianity of Jesus Christ.

The evolution of Christianity will not be complete until on these principles the social and industrial structure of modern society is built, and there is much for the reformer to do before this consummation is finally and fully accomplished. *Dr. Lyman Abbott* in *The Evolution of Christianity.*

II Examining the Scriptures

John Wesley's Method of Examining the Scriptures. In the introduction to his sermons, John Wesley gives this account of his method of Bible study.

Here I am, far away from the busy ways of men. I sit down alone; only God is here. In his presence I open and I read his Book for this end—to find the way to heaven. Is there a doubt concerning the meaning of what I read?

Does anything appear dark or intricate? I lift up my heart to the Father of lights. Lord, is it not thy Word? If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God. Thou hast said, if any man be willing to do thy will he shall know. I am willing to do, let me know thy will. I then search out and consider parallel passages of Scripture, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. I meditate thereon with all the confession and earnestness of which my mind is capable. If any doubt still remains, I consult those who are experienced in the things of God, and then the writings whereby, these being dead, yet speak, and what I thus learn, that I teach.

The Book Brings the Man to God. You know that the only way by which a Moslem is ever brought to the faith of Christ is when he is induced to read the Bible. If once you can get a Mohammedan to study the Bible his conversion is practically certain. He resists preaching and, of course, he resists denunciation, but not the Bible. I read only this afternoon about an English officer in Kashmir who was a devout and Christian-like man. He was shooting in the mountains of Kashmir accompanied by his native servant who was a Mohammedan, and this good man every day read his Bible and prayed in his tent. His servant ventured once to ask him what he read and he explained to him it was the New Testament, and then he said: "If you would read it I will get you a vernacular copy, but you must promise to read it", and the Mohammedan said he would, and this English officer procured him a New Testament in his own language. The native read it, and before long he came and asked to be baptized, and he became himself a preacher of the Christian message. What cannot be said of any preaching, what cannot be said of any systematic teaching of the Church, can be said of the Bible, that this Book left to itself, without note or comment, without explanation or criticism, left in the hands of any reader who is not hardened or prejudiced and determined to resist it, brings the man to God. From a *Sermon* by *Dr. Robert F. Horton.*

How a Child Examined the Scriptures. Once a man was put in prison in England for a deed which another man had done. While there he heard a sermon, which led to his conversion. He determined that all his children, too, should become Christians, and he gave them each a Bible. One of his sons is now the famous evangelist known as "Gipsy Smith". "I used to get down under a hedge in a corner of the field, or under a tree anywhere", he says, "and hold my first Bible open before me, very often the wrong way up; but it was the Bible, and I believed it. I prayed beside that Bible—a little nomad, without school or any one to help me—'Lord Jesus, I cannot read this Book, but I want its spirit in my heart'; and that prayer was answered long before I could read a letter."

How the Scriptures were Received in Uganda. Janet Livingstone, the sister of David Livingstone, made me a present of a richly bound Bible. Not liking to risk it on the voyage round the Victoria Nyanza, I asked Frank Pocock, my companion, to lend me his somewhat worn and stained copy; and I sailed on my way to Uganda, little thinking what a revolution in Central Africa that book would make. We stayed in Uganda some time, and one day during a morning levee, the subject of religion was broached, and I happened to strike an emotional chord in the King's heart by making a casual reference to angels. King and chiefs were moved as one man to hear more about angels. My verbal descriptions of them were not sufficient. "But", said I, "I have a book with me which will tell you far better, not only what angels are, but what God and his blessed Son are like, to whom the angels are but ministering servants".

"Fetch it", they cried eagerly. "Fetch it now; we will wait." The book was brought, opened, and I read the 10th chapter of Ezekiel, and the 7th chapter of Revelation from the 9th verse to the end; and as I read the 11th and 12th verses you could have heard a pin drop, and, when they heard the concluding verses, "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat", I had a presentiment that Uganda would eventually be won for Christ. I was not permitted to carry that Bible away. Mtesa never forgot the wonderful words, nor the striking effect they had on him and on his chiefs. As I was turning away from his country, his messenger came, and cried: "The book! Mtesa wants the book!" It was given to him. To-day the Christians number many thousands in Uganda. They have

proved their faith at the stake, under the knobstick, and under torture, till death. *Henry M. Stanley.*

A Valued Treasure. Mr. Egerton R. Young lived a long time among the Indians of Northwestern British America, and has given us interesting glimpses into their lives. Once, he tells us, a party of these red men, who had become Christians and had learned to read their Indian translation of the Bible, made a long trip to Lake Superior to fish. They took as little with them as possible, but they did not fail to put into their packs their Bibles. On the evening before their return home after the season of fishing was over, one Indian had read aloud from his Bible, and his son had then carefully stowed it away in his pack. While he was sleeping, another Indian living there came in and asked to borrow the book, but failed to return it that night. Early the next morning the father and son put on their snow shoes and started on their long journey. On reaching their home and opening the pack, the loss of the Bible was discovered. The next morning the father was missing. He had started back to the Great Lakes. With a speed that only a native skilled in the use of snow-shoe travel could make, he traversed the whole distance and recovered his Book. To him it was worth at least a journey of two hundred and eighty miles.

Why a Boy or Girl Should Examine the Scriptures. Dickens wrote to his boy who had gone to Australia: I put a New Testament among your books because it is the best Book that ever was or ever will be known in the world, and because it teaches you the best lessons by which any human creature who tries to be faithful and truthful to duty can possibly be guided.

Why a Man or Woman Should Examine the Scriptures. The first and almost the only book deserving of universal attention is the Bible. The Bible is the book of all others to be read at all ages and in all conditions of human life; not to be read once or twice through and then laid aside, but to be read in small portions of one or two chapters every day, and never to be intermitted except by some overruling necessity. I speak as a man of the world to men of the world, and I say to you, "Search the Scriptures". *John Quincy Adams.*

III The Berœan Spirit

Why the Berœans were more Noble than the Thessalonian Jews. High praise it is which Paul bestows upon the Berœans. Was it merely because they examined the Scriptures? The Jews of Thessalonica, whom Paul declares less noble, examined the Scriptures no less zealously. All Jews were very familiar with their sacred writings. Wherein, then, lay the difference between Thessalonian and Berœan Jews? In their different standpoint, their different spirit in which they examined the Scriptures. The Thessalonian Jews were narrow-minded, bigoted men: they examined the Scriptures with minds already proof-hardened. The Berœan Jews were open-minded, truth-seekers; they examined the Scriptures daily whether these things were so. To both, Paul brought a new message, that Jesus is the Christ foretold in the Scriptures. The prejudiced Thessalonians flatly rejected the message without any effort to find out for themselves whether Paul's words agreed with the prophecies. The unprejudiced Berœans gave his message a fair hearing and then with inquiring spirit looked up the passages and weighed them with Paul's words. We are not surprised that the next words of the account read, "Many of them *therefore* believed".

Why Some are Infidels. "The most prominent and invariable cause of infidelity is found in the fact that men will not investigate the Scriptures; many infidels have confessed that they have never carefully read the New Testament. Thomas Paine confessed that he wrote the first part of the 'Age of Reason' without having a Bible at hand, and without its being possible to procure one where he then was."

Dr. A. T. Pierson tells this incident. A celebrated clergyman riding in the same conveyance with a noisy infidel, and hearing him propose a shallow objection to Christianity, thought he would see how sincere he was, and he said: "My dear sir, have you ever examined the book of the prophecy of *Jedediah* as furnishing an answer to your objection?" "Yes", said the skeptic. "I have examined it thoroughly and do not deem it satisfactory"!

The True Berœan Spirit in China. A young Chinese in Kansu bought a

copy of every edition a Bible colporteur was carrying. He then piled the volumes before the image of Buddha in his home, and said to it: "Are you true, or are these books true? I have bowed down and worshipped you for many years, and you have said no good words to me, nor given me any good books like these to read. In them I find forgiveness of sins and the way to heaven; are you true, or are they?"

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

Now is the time to receive the word with all readiness of mind and to examine the Scriptures daily. Here is an agreement which Mr. R. A. Torrey sometimes asks his hearers to sign. Will you sign it? "I promise to examine carefully the evidence that the Bible is God's book and Jesus Christ is God's Son and man's Savior; and if I find reason to believe that this book is true, and he is man's Savior, I will accept and confess him before men and undertake to follow him."

Our Prayer. We thank thee for thy Book, O God. Forgive us, we pray thee, for ever having neglected it, and grant that we may become worthy of the commendation given the Berœans. Help us to understand thy Book, to learn its lessons, to live by its teachings. Then shall we be more earnest in thy service, and like Paul, thy great apostle, courageous and zealous in the work thou hast given us to do—whether in Sunday-school or church or home or community. We ask it in the name of him who was the Inspirer of all that Paul did, and who is our Inspirer and Helper.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The study of the Bible today. See "The Bible in the American College", *Outlook*, Jan. 19, 1907; "Faith and Fear", *Outlook*, July 13, 1907; "Religion and the Schools", *Atlantic Monthly*, Jan., 1915.

2. The Bible and modern life. See book with this title, by Clayton Sedgwick Cooper; "What Christianity is doing for the World", *Missionary Review of the World*, June, 1914, p. 447.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. How long did Paul labor at Thessalonica? 2. What was the cause of his leaving? 3. Where has he been since? 4. What books of the New Testament did Paul write? 5. Name them all in the order in which they are printed. 6. Look up these references to Silas and tell what you learn from them: Acts 15.22, 32, 40; 16.19, 20, 25, 37; 17.4, 10, 14, 15; 18.5. 7. What is said about Timothy in Acts 16.1, 2; 2 Tim. 3.10, 11; Phil. 2.19-22? 8. What message did Timothy bring Paul about the Thessalonians? (1 Thess. 3.6.) 9. Where was Macedonia? Achaia? 10. In which one only of Paul's letters do not words of thanksgiving follow his words of greeting? 11. Where does Paul say, "Be ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ"?

Questions to Think About. 1. What would you call verse 1 if it were written in a letter today? 2. Who was Silvanus? 3. What is meant by verse 4? (*Guide*, p. 273.) 4. What is meant by "our gospel", verse 5? 5. How had the Thessalonians "received the word in much affliction"? (*Guide*, p. 273.) 6. What words in the lesson inform us that the majority of the Thessalonian Christians were Gentiles? 7. What is meant by "are fallen asleep in Jesus"? 8. Who are "the rest", 4.13? 9. This letter is the earliest written book of the New Testament: where is the earliest written statement about the resurrection of Christ? 10. What is meant by "This we say unto you by the word of the Lord"? (*Guide*, p. 273.) 11. What is the main thought in verses 16-17?

Questions upon the First Epistle to the Thessalonians. (See pp. 30, 31, of our Introduction.) 1. When was Paul in Thessalonica, and what, in brief, is the record of his stay there? 2. What was the occasion for his first letter to the Thessalonians? 3. What is the character and purpose of the letter? 4. What are its lessons for today?

Memory and Note-Book Work. Memorize 1 Thess. 4.13-18. Write Chapter VIII, At Thessalonica and Berœa.

LESSON II—JULY 9

THE THESSALONIAN CHRISTIANS

Golden Text

If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also that are fallen asleep in Jesus will God bring with him. 1 Thessalonians 4.14

LESSON 1 Thessalonians 1; 2.17-20; 4.13-18: 1 Thessalonians 1; 4.13-18 printed
MEMORIZE verses 4.16, 17

1 1 Paul, and Silvanus, and Timothy, unto the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace.

2 We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention *of you* **in our prayers; 3 remembering without ceasing your work of faith and labor of love and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, before our God and Father; 4 knowing, brethren beloved of God, your election, 5 how that our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit, and** *in* **much assurance; even as ye know what manner of men we showed ourselves toward you for your sake. 6 And ye became imitators of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit; 7 so that ye became an ensample to all that believe in Macedonia and in Achaia. 8 For from you hath sounded forth the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place your faith to God-ward is gone forth; so that we need not to speak anything. 9 For they themselves report concerning us what manner of entering in we had unto you; and how ye turned unto God from idols, to serve a living and true God, 10 and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead,** *even* **Jesus, who delivereth us from the wrath to come.**

4 13 But we would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them that fall asleep; that ye sorrow not, even as the rest, who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also that are fallen asleep in Jesus will God bring with him. 15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we that are alive, that are left unto the coming of the Lord, shall in no wise precede them that are fallen asleep. 16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first; 17 then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. 18 Wherefore, comfort one another with these words.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

I. Salutation, 1.1.
II. Thanksgiving, 1.2-10.
  1. For their Conversion, 1.2-5.
  2. For their Spiritual Growth, 1.6-10.
III. Resurrection Hope in Christ, 4.13-18.

1. This verse is the salutation, or greeting, of the letter.—*Paul and Silvanus and Timothy. Silvanus* is the full Latin name, of which *Silas* is a contraction. Silas and Timothy had been Paul's assistants at Thessalonica, last lesson, and they were with him at Corinth when he wrote this letter. See Acts 15.22, 37, 38; 18.5; 2 Cor. 1.19. For Timothy Paul had a special fondness, and upon him he often relied: see Acts 16.1; Rom. 16, 21; 1 Cor. 4.14-17; 2 Cor. 1.19; Phil. 1.1; 2.19-24; 2 Tim. 1.5; 3.14.—*The church...in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.* This is a phrase peculiar to this Epistle; it explains what makes this community of people a church.

2. *We give thanks to God always for you all.* In all of Paul's letters his words of greeting are followed by words of thanksgiving, with the exception of the

Epistle to the Galatians, in which he has such a weighty, personal question to settle that he plunges at once in *medias res.*

3. *Your work of faith and labor of love and patience of hope.* They showed the true marks of Christians, the faith, hope, and love which Paul immortalizes in 1 Cor. 15.—*Work of faith.* Faith is inward state, but it is a power impelling to action; where there is genuine faith there will be genuine works.—*Labor of love.* As there can be no true faith without works, so there can be no true love without labor.—*Patience of hope.* This, too, is a beautiful and true expression.

4. *Election.* That is, "election to Christian and Church privileges, 2 Tim. 2.10". "These people were the object of the mysterious movement of the Spirit of God which the apostle calls 'election'. No wonder he explained it so, for here were people showing a substantial growth of character; and yet were only a few months Christian."

5. *How that.* Dependent grammatically upon *knowing,* verse 4, and what follows is explanatory of *your election.*—*Our gospel.* The good news preached by Paul and his assistants.—*Assurance. Fulness,* RVm. Assurance that the message was divine.—*Even as ye know....for your sake.* "We see the same thing repeated in the story of Robert and Mary Moffat, where the Africans are impressed with their self-denying kindness in coming out from England and living among the native people solely for the good of these people" (*Adeney*).

6. *Ye became imitators of us.* Compare 1 Cor. 11.1: Be ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ.—*Having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit.* Not as did the man in the parable of the sower, Mt. 13.21. The *affliction* is a reference to the persecution recorded in our last lesson, which no doubt continued after Paul's departure.

7. *So that ye became an ensample.* Notwithstanding the "affliction" at the hands of men so enraged that they had followed Paul to Berœa and induced the authorities to turn him out of that city also, the Christians at Thessalonica had remained steadfast in the faith, a good example to others.—*In Macedonia.* Of this province Thessalonica was the capital.—*In Achaia.* Paul was writing this epistle from Corinth, the capital of the province of Achaia (Greece).

8. *Hath sounded forth.* The Greek verb means a loud proclamation.

9. *They themselves.* Those living in the places visited by Paul or from which he had had reports—in contrast with *me,* verse 8.—*What manner of entering in we had unto you.* Paul's thought returns to that of verse 5.—*How ye turned unto God from idols.* Compare Acts 14.15. This sentence indicates that the majority of Paul's readers, the church at Thessalonica, were Gentile converts, not Jews.

10. *To wait for his Son from heaven.* To await the Second Coming. "These words strike the keynote of the epistle" (*Vincent*).—*The wrath to come.* See Mt. 1.21.

4.13. *We would not have you ignorant.* A form used by Paul in calling especial attention to his words; similar are his expressions, "I declare unto you", "I would have you know".—*Concerning them that fall asleep.* Concerning the dead. There was much anxiety in the Christian community at Thessalonica concerning the status of their beloved dead at the coming of Christ. At Corinth certain ones felt such keen anxiety about their friends who had died outside the Church that they had themselves baptized as the representatives of such dead, believing that they would thereby insure the latter's final salvation, 1 Cor. 15.29.—*Even as the rest.* As those who are not Christians.—*Who have no hope.* "The speculations and surmisings of pagan philosophy do not amount to hope."

4.14. *That Christ died and rose again.* This epistle is the earliest written of the New Testament books, hence this is the first written statement of Christ's resurrection, written about twenty years after the event.—*That are fallen asleep in Jesus.* That died believing in Jesus.—*Will God bring with him.* "Bring, sweet word, it is spoken of living persons" (*Bengel*). The dead are not dead, they are with the living God.

4.15. *This we say unto you by the word of the Lord.* Paul is not speaking on his own authority merely: either Paul knew of some word spoken by Jesus which has not been recorded in the Gospels, or he referred to the Holy Spirit's teaching.—*We that are alive.* The Second Advent was believed to be near at

hand. We should not marvel that Paul knew not the time of Christ's Second Coming, for Christ himself said (Mk. 13.32) that of that day or that hour knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. —*Shall in no wise precede them that are fallen asleep.* Paul assures them that those living at the Second Advent will have no advantage over the Christian dead.

4.16. Compare Mt. 24.30, 31 and 1 Cor. 15.51, 52. "The following description of the Lord's descent from heaven is intended to emphasize the fact that the reunion of dead and living believers will be accomplished by the Lord in person. In the details themselves there are traces of certain Old Testament theophanies, as Ex. 19.11-18; Micah 1.3" (*Vincent*). We must keep in mind that the language here is figurative.—*The trump of God.* Evidently the trumpet heralding God's appearance is meant.

4.17. *Together with them.* At the same time, there shall be no precedence of the living, verse 15.—*Shall be caught up.* See 2 Cor. 12.2, 4; Acts 8.39.—*And so.* And afterwards.

4.18. *Comfort one another with these words.* "Now the question arises, was all this a delusion? Certainly Christ did not return in the visible way expected by the early Christians. But 'illusion' is a better word than 'delusion' with which to describe their condition. We are always being educated by illusions. 'Things are not what they seem.' Yet they exist. To primitive man the sun seems to rise and set; to all of us who know better it wears that appearance. Yet we are not fundamentally deluded about the appearance of the sun. The phenomena of day and night are real, and they do really depend on changing relations between the sun and the earth. Christ might come in other ways than were expected—in the overthrow of the Jewish persecuting power, in the spread of Christianity and the victory of his spirit over the world, in any judgment of evil, in any triumph of God of which he was the center and source and vital power. Then, though the sensation of wondrous appearing in the clouds would not be enjoyed, the real end of the second coming would be accomplished. But this was not so understood at the time. When Paul wrote about the Lord descending from heaven, all this would be taken literally. And when he added, 'Comfort one another with these words' the consolation would be found in the vivid anticipation that these things were shortly about to happen in a visible, external way exactly according to the literal meaning of the apostle's language" (*Adeney*).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

2. *Making mention of you in our prayers.* Professor Deissmann has culled specimens of similar salutations from the ancient papyri. In a letter dated 172 B. C. an Egyptian woman writes: "Isias to her brother Hephæstian, greeting. If you are well, and other things happen as you would wish, it would be in accordance with my constant prayer to the gods. I myself am well, and the boy; and all at home make constant remembrance of you."

4.13. *We would not have you ignorant concerning them that are asleep.* Similar but not identical questions bothered the writers of the Apocalypse of Baruch and Fourth Ezra; but their answers differ from that of Paul. Baruch says: "Announce in Sheol and say to the dead; Blessed are ye more than we who are living". Ezra writes that the seer first pronounce woe unto the survivors and more woe unto the dead, but concludes, that it is better or happier for the survivors. Paul's encouraging word is that living and dead are at the Parousia on a level of vantage. *James Everett Frame,* in *Commentary on the Epistle to Thessalonians.*

4.13. *That ye sorrow not, even as the rest who have no hope.* In the library of Yale University there is a letter from Irene, an Egyptian, to a family in mourning, second century A. D., a papyrus from Oxyrhynchus, which translated reads: "Irene to Taonnophris and Philo, good comfort. I was as sorry and wept over the departed one as I wept over Didymas. And all things, whatsoever were fitting, I did, and all mine, Epaphroditus and Thermuthion and Philion and Apollonius and Plantas. But, nevertheless, against such things one can do nothing. Therefore comfort ye one another. Fare ye well."

Professor Deissmann, in "Light from the Ancient East", gives the translation

and thus explains the letter. Philo and Taonnophris, a married pair at Oxyrhynchus, have lost a son by death, and Irene, a friend of the sorrowing mother, wishes to express her sympathy. She can fully understand the grief of her friend; she weeps over again the tears that she shed before for her own lost one, the departed Didymas; personal sorrow has made her sympathetic with other people's trouble. She speaks, therefore, of her own tears first. But she must write more than that, it is to be a letter of consolation. Irene experiences the difficulty of those whose business it is to console, and who have no consolation to offer. And so she ponders over sentences to fill up the sheet: it will be a satisfaction to the mourners to hear that she and all her family have fulfilled all the duties of affection and decency that are customary in such cases—(funeral offerings? prayers? one would gladly know more). But after these lines full of names, slowly written with great effort, the genuine feeling in her heart breaks through, that despairing resignation which speaks of inevitable fates. And then, illogical and truly womanly, the concluding injunction, "Comfort ye one another"! Who could help feeling for the helplessness of this woman, whose own sympathy was assuredly so true? St. Paul doubtless was thinking of such despairing souls in his letter to Thessalonica, when he inserted these words of comfort for the Christians in trouble for their dead.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. When did we first hear of Silas? What next have we heard about him? What has been heard about Timothy? Of what Roman province was Thessalonica the capital? Where was Thessalonica? What is its name today? What happened to Paul there? What facts concerning Jesus had Paul proclaimed everywhere? What letters of Paul have we studied? What was our selection from Romans about? What was the contents of our selection from Philippians? What were the themes of our lesson from Galatians? Recall our Easter lesson from First Corinthians: what are its teachings?

Paul's Anxiety about the Thessalonians. From Thessalonica and Berœa (our last lesson), Paul went on to Athens. There he awaited the coming of Silas and Timothy; but he purposed going back to Thessalonica, for he was most anxious about the disciples whom he had left there. Yet he was "hindered by Satan". Perhaps he feared that Jason would have to suffer were he to appear again in the city. He sent Timothy to Thessalonica to strengthen them (1 Thess. 3.1-5).

The First Epistle to the Thessalonians. From Athens (about his mission there we shall hear next Sunday). Paul went on to Corinth, where he staid a year and six months. During this time he wrote both his letters to the Thessalonians. First Thessalonians is the eighth of Paul's Epistles as printed in our New Testament, but the order in which they are printed is not the order in which they were written. This was the first written of them all. For information concerning the Epistle, see pp. 30, 31 of our Introduction.

Pulpit at Thessalonica from which Tradition says Paul Preached

For Thessalonica, see p. 266. For Corinth, see p. 293.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

It was the news brought to Paul at Corinth by Silas and Timothy (Acts 18.5; 1 Thess. 3.6) concerning the church at Thessalonica which caused Paul to utter the expressions of thanksgiving recorded in our lesson. Full well Paul knew all the faults and failings of the Thessalonian converts, but with these he does not begin in his letter to them.

The apostle Paul lived a life of prayer, and he carried to the throne of God

those whom he had been instrumental in leading to God. How heartening it must have been for the Thessalonians to hear from Paul himself that he was making mention of them in his prayers! You who have your pupils' welfare so much at heart, be imitators of Paul also in this.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. At the Council at Jerusalem, you remember, the apostles and elders wrote a letter to the Gentile churches in Syria and Cilicia telling them what was required of them. This is the first Christian letter that we hear about. When did it reach the people to whom it was written? Paul carried that letter to them, and other letters were carried by other Christian messengers, for there were no postoffices and public letter carriers in those days. The emperors of Rome had special messengers to carry their letters over the empire. The great business companies had their own men who went from one place to another with their business letters. If you had lived at that time you could not have sent a letter to a friend in another city unless you owned a slave whom you could send with it, or could find some one who was going that way and was willing to take your letter for you and deliver it to your friend.

Let us recall the letters of Paul from which we have already had lessons. What was the first one?

For Older Pupils. Thessalonica was a great capital, and a great seaport, "the Liverpool of northern Greece", as it had been called, but among all the letters that came to it not one was so important as a letter sent from Corinth to the little band of Thessalonian Christians, probably in 53 A. D., from the apostle Paul. That letter, the earliest piece of Christian literature that has come down to us, the oldest part of the New Testament, is our study today.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Thanking God

Paul's Custom. The giving of thanks held the first place in Paul's prayers. Near the beginning of his letter to the Ephesians (1.16) he wrote, I cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; in his letter to the Philippians he said (1.3) I thank my God upon all my remembrance of you, always in every supplication of mine on behalf of you all making my supplication with joy; and he allowed the Thessalonians to hear how "we (he and his co-workers) give thanks to God always for you, making mention of you in our prayers".

Paul, overwhelmed with work day and night, still found time and opportunity to pray to God; and can we truthfully say that our lives are so crowded that we can not pray? And Paul, troubled and persecuted as he was, never failed to thank God for this and that great blessing. And have we not great cause for gratitude? Let us be imitators of the great apostle in the habit of prayer and in the habit of expressing our thankfulness in prayer. Nothing so frees us from discouragement and discontent as giving thanks. And thanksgiving is pleasing unto God.

We Give Thanks to God for You. "I was walking down street one cold winter day", said a Christian man. "At a nearby corner sat an old colored woman. Her face was wrinkled, her head white with age. Her withered hand was outstretched in an appeal for aid. Moved by a strong feeling of her need I stopped and dropped a good-sized coin into her hand. 'Does you mean all dat for me, Marse?' said she. I nodded assent. 'I'll carry you to de feet of my Jesus for dat' was her trembling response. At once a great joy leaped into my heart. I passed on my way with my soul aglow with the consciousness of the Master's presence, marveling that so great a blessing could come from so trifling a deed." *James H. McConkey*, in *"China's Millions"*.

How to Gain the Spirit of Thankfulness. A missionary named Sanford Cobb heard a little boy say that he knew he had a great deal to thank God for, but, somehow, he did not feel thankful. The missionary said, "Do you ever tell God that you know you have many mercies?" "Yes, sometimes", said the boy. "Do you ever tell him so aloud, so that you hear yourself talking to God?" "Why, no", the little fellow said, "I never did thank God aloud." "Try it",

said Mr. Cobb, "and keep on trying". The boy acted upon his advice. He thanked God aloud for all his gifts, and he grew so happy that afterward he loved to thank God, because he really came to have a grateful heart. You try it. Since I heard that story I have tried it, and it has helped me. I find that it helps me to remember God's mercies; and speaking to God as I would to you, helps to concentrate one's thoughts. *James Learmount.*

II Christians in Sorrow

That ye Sorrow not, even as the Rest, who have no Hope. The old Greek cemetery at Athens, containing pathetic expressions of love for the departed, and its sad "farewells", without any hope of meeting the beloved parent or wife or child again, is in striking contrast with what we read in the catacombs at Rome of the Christian hope of life beyond the grave. Classic writers abound with dreary expressions of the hopelessness of death. Thus among the Greeks Theocritus says, "Hopes are among the living, but the dead are without hope", and Catullus among the Romans, "Suns can set and rise again. When once our brief life sets, there must be the sleep of one perpetual night". On the other hand, an inscription in the catacombs of Callixtus begins, "Alexander is not dead, but he lives above the stars and his body rests in this tomb". *Smith's Dictionary of Christian Antiquities.*

A Child's True Spirit. A little girl who had always been accustomed to pray for her father and mother at night, lost her father by death. Kneeling for her first evening prayer after he fell asleep, she exclaimed to her mother through her sobs: "O mother, I can't leave him out! Let me say, 'Thank God I had a dear father once', so I can keep him in my prayers."

They "Really Believed It". A little more than a month before Easter she had returned from the burial place outside the great city, leaving there in the silence her fourteen-year-old boy. Two days later her little girl gave up the fight and in less than a week, her baby. Only the little three-year-old escaped. It was diphtheria. When Easter came she was at church with her husband and the child. Her face was pale but tender and beautiful. She wore no emblems of her sorrow, and the lilies and violets on her coat were like those she had worn every Easter since I had known her. When the great congregation rose to sing, she sang softly the words:

"The powers of death have done their worst,
But Christ their legions hath dispersed."

Her husband stood with his head bowed. He could not sing. But she touched his hand as it lay on the back of the pew, and when they recited the Creed I heard him saying the words steadily, "I believe in the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting".

She taught her class of girls that day and he went to his superintendent's desk, led his school in worship and read the Easter story with only a break now and then in his fine voice. Amidst the faces lined with suffering, rebellion and despair, of the Easter congregation, they had seemed a miracle. "How can they?" men and women said to each other as they left the church. A fifteen-year-old boy walking home with his father from the Sunday-school said, "Dad, I guess Mr. and Mrs. L— really believe it, don't they". "Believe what"? said the father. "The whole big thing, all of it, Easter, you know." From an *article* in the *Congregationalist* by *Miss Margaret Slattery.*

The True Faith. At a quarter to nine in the morning the little girl, a bright and lovely child, kissed her mother good-by and started in the omnibus for school. Half an hour later her lifeless body was brought home. There had been an accident—a man had blundered, and a collision had followed. Almost insane with grief, the mother sent for her nearest friend, a woman whose strength and wealth were constantly poured out for the poor and suffering. She came instantly. The mother looked at her, wild-eyed.

"Tell me", she said, "where is my baby now—where is she now?" And her friend could only answer with a cry as heart-breaking, "I don't know!"

Hours later, when the sad news had spread through the town, another woman hurried to the house—an Irish washerwoman who had worked for the family for years. The mother lifted her hot, tearless eyes. "Where is she now?" she cried, as she had to the other woman. "Where is she now?"

The old Irishwoman held the distracted hands in a firm grasp. "Listen, darlint", she said. "She's safe—safe and well and happy. Why, deary, do you think a lovin' God gives us mothers children just to torture us by takin' them away forever? She's well and happy—over there. And when you, too, go to the blessed mansions the Book tells about, the first one you'll see will be her—waitin'."

It was a simple faith, but it had carried the old washerwoman triumphantly through a hard life. She had leaned upon it in a thousand emergencies, and now it helped her—and another—through one more. For two days she stayed with the poor mother, and gave tirelessly and with unfailing patience of the faith that had grown so strong in her.

In nearly every human life there is some such experience as this. Again and again men and women are brought to the place where knowledge, philosophy, culture, all fail them, and only trust like that of a little child can help. Then a strange readjustment of values takes place. Often it is the poor, the uneducated, the humble who are found to have the only solace that the tortured soul desires—the solace of a steadfast faith tested by the stress and strain of difficult years. They who have such faith hold the true treasure of life. *Condensed* from *The Youth's Companion.*

III The Christian Doctrine of Immortality

So shall we ever be with the Lord. "Shall I read to you the sweetest verse of the Bible?" questioned a young man of a dying saint. "Yes", came the answer. And the young man read these beauitful words of Jesus: "In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you: I go to prepare a place for you." "Oh, but that is not the sweetest verse: read on", said the dying man. "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." "That is it, that is the sweetest verse", exclaimed the dying man. "It is not the mansions, it is himself that I want."

The Realms of the Blest. What are some of the characteristic glories of the life which is to be spent for ever with the Lord? I can tell you nothing you do not know; but perhaps just by repeating a commonplace in a fresh way I may give it a certain newness.

It is a life of rest. I do not wonder that Faber, in one of his books, when he had mentioned this word "rest" added the sentence: "Let us stay and suck that word as if it were a honeycomb". Now people who are never tired can not know the significance of rest. But people who have to labor very hard, and amid very straitened circumstances, find in the word a delicious consolation. I remember once talking with a fisherwoman who had lost her husband and two sons at sea. I asked her what she liked most to think about when she thought about the land beyond, and I was not surprised to hear her say, "And there shall be no more sea". And when you go to very tired people, people who are not only physically tired but mentally worn, there is no word which appeals to them with such sweet significance as just this common word "rest".

It is a life of quest. It is not a life of mere passivity, but a life of glorious activity. First of all our quest is to be under the immediate leadership of our Lord: "He shall lead them to living fountains of water". The unveiling of new things, the unsealing of new springs! When we have dropped the clay and the veil of the flesh, we shall stand out with immeasurably increased powers of perception, and going with our Lord as our personal Conductor among the wonders of unveiled truth and all the splendors of glory, with our immeasurably intensified powers, we shall find countless kinds of new and unimaginable delights break out before us on every side.

It is a life of service. I like that little phrase that Swedenborg uses—There will be occupation but no labor. The worker is never tired! His activity is never toil! It is a life of uses, and every soul will have its individual enterprise.

It is a life of wondrous communion. First of all, it is communion with one another. I sometimes say to my people when they are telling me their sorrows and their troubles, and when neither the teller nor the hearer can find even the faintest clue, "You will explain it to me some day!" I say it as a

glorious conviction that one of the joys and delights of the heavenly country will be the perfect understanding of the things that have bewildered us here. We shall get the clue, and we shall tell one another the story which down here we found a burden and a destroyer of our peace.

It is to be a life of fellowship with the Lord. "Forever with the Lord! Amen, so let it be!" "The Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall tabernacle among them." It is a homely figure; it is the figure of a meeting-place of many tents, and our God comes and adds his tent to the number. He is one with us, one among us; allowing us to go into his tent, and coming into our tent, a life of shared fellowship, a life of close intimacy in the things of the blessed. *Condensed* from *The Silver Lining,* by *Dr. J. H. Jowett.*

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

The apostle Paul lived a life of prayer. Do you?

In everything, says Paul, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God. Commit to memory and to life Shakespeare's counsel:

> God's goodness hath been great to thee!
> Let never day nor night unhallowed pass,
> But still remember what the Lord hath done.

Paul thanked God for the Thessalonians' work of faith and labor of love and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. How is it with you as regards your faith and love and hope?

Our Prayer. Aid us, O Lord, in our concerns. Accept and inflame our gratitude; help us to repay in service, one to another, the debt of thine unmerited benefits and mercies. Help us yet again and ever. So order events, so corroborate our frailty, as that day by day we shall come before thee with this song of gratitude, and in the end we be dismissed with honor. Amen. *Robert Louis Stevenson.*

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Paul's Epistle to the Thessalonians. See pp. 30, 31 of our Introduction.
2. The Christian Doctrine of Immortality. See the Third Topic.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. Where is Athens? 2. What is its port? 3. For what is it famous? 4. Of what famous battle would Paul naturally think as he sailed from Macedonia to Piræus? (*Guide,* p. 283.) 5. What is the legend as to the origin of Athens? (*Guide,* p. 284.) 6. What was it provoked Paul on his arrival at Athens? 7. Where did he preach? 8. What did the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers say about his preaching? 9. How did it happen that Paul "stood in the midst of the Areopagus"? 10. What was the Areopagus? (*Guide,* p. 283.) 11. What would Paul see from where he stood? (*Guide,* p. 283.) 12. With verse 25 compare Isa. 66.1 and 2. 13. How did the idolaters regard their worship as essential to the gods? (*Guide,* p. 282.) 14. Where are the two quotations in verse 28 found? (*Guide,* p. 281.) 15. How did Paul characterize the Athenians in the twenty-first verse of this chapter?

Questions to Think About. 1. For what was Athens famous? 2. Who were some of her philosophers? 3. Why did not Paul say anything in his speech at Athens about Old Testament history, as we have heard him elsewhere? 4. What resemblances and what differences do you find in comparing Paul's address at Athens with his address at Lystra? 5. In what respects is Paul's address remarkable? 6. What words of Stephen are recalled by verse 24? 7. What was the meaning of the inscription "To an Unknown God"? 8. Why would the words of verse 26 be unpleasing to the Athenians? (*Guide,* p. 281.) 9. What is the argument of verse 29? (*Guide,* p. 281.) 10. What earlier words of Paul's are recalled by verse 30? (Acts 14.16.) 11. What is meant by "the Areopagite"?

Memory and Note-Book Work. Memorize Acts 17.22-31. In your Note-Book about the Epistles of Paul write what you know about the First Epistle to the Thessalonians. See pp. 30, 31 of our Introduction. In your book about "Lessons from Paul's Words", write "Paul's Message to the Thessalonians".

LESSON III—JULY 16

PAUL AT ATHENS

Golden Text

In him we live, and move, and have our being. Acts 17.28

LESSON Acts 17.16-34: verses 22-34 printed MEMORIZE verses 22, 23

22 And Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus, and said,
Ye men of Athens, in all things I perceive that ye are very religious. 23 For as I passed along, and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. What therefore ye worship in ignorance, this I set forth unto you. 24 The God that made the world and all things therein, he, being Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; 25 neither is he served by men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he himself giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; 26 and he made of one every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, having determined *their* appointed seasons, and the bounds of their habitation; 27 that they should seek God, if haply they might feel after him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us: 28 for in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain even of your own poets have said,
For we are also his offspring.
29 Being then the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and device of man. 30 The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked; but now he commandeth men that they should all everywhere repent: 31 inasmuch as he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.
32 Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked; but others said, We will hear thee concerning this yet again. 33 Thus Paul went out from among them. 34 But certain men clave unto him, and believed: among whom also was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

I. The Sermon, 22-31.
  1. The Text—To an Unknown God, 22-23.
  2. The Interpretation, 24-29.
  3. The Application, 30-31.
II. The Effect of the Sermon, 32-34.

22. *In the midst of the Areopagus.* See verse 19 and ¶ 5, p. 283.—*Ye men of Athens.* As many have recalled, these are the classical words familiar through the writings of Thucidides and Demosthenes.—*Very religious.* Or, *somewhat superstitious,* RVm. The Greek word δεισιδαιμονεστέρους means literally *more God-fearing.* Paul's words could be taken either as a compliment or the reverse, but they must have been intended as a compliment.

23. *Observed the objects of your worship.* See p. 281.—*To an Unknown God.* To Unknown God is the Greek, for there is no article. "It is more discreet to speak well of gods, especially at Athens, where there are erected altars to unknown gods" (*Philostratus,* 244 A. D.)

> Immortal Greece, dear land of glorious lays,
> Lo, here the Unknown God of thine unconscious praise.
>
> (*Keble*)

The Athenians feared there might be some divinity whom they had not heard of, and he must be propitiated. "The inscription, as Paul probably knew, had a

ST PAUL

Detail from Painting of St Cecilia by Raphael

purely pagan meaning; but the phrase was a fine one; it was capable of a higher sense, and in this higher sense Paul made it the text of his sermon" (*Dummelow*). Hinduism of India claims to recognize three hundred and thirty million gods.

24. *The God that made the world and all things therein.* See Isa. 42.5, and recall Acts 4.24 and 14.15.—*Dwelleth not in temples made with hands.* Recall Stephen's words, Acts 7.48.

25-27. *He himself giveth.* All things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee, 1 Ch. 29.14.—*He made of one every nation of men.* This was severe preaching to Athenians who called all men not Greeks barbarians.—*Seasons.* The stages in a nation's history.—*Haply.* Perhaps.

28. *In him we live, and move, and have our being.* This is a line found in "Minos", a poem written by Epimenides (from which Paul quotes again in Titus 1.12), and Augustine was probably right in taking the next clause with this sentence also. Sir William Ramsay recalls the fact that Epimenides had taught the Athenians to cure a plague by erecting altars "to the deity concerned" (the unknown one who had sent the pestilence) at every spot where one of a flock of sheep that he had turned loose lay down. The inscription on the altar, which Paul quotes as the starting-point of his address, brought to his mind, so Ramsay thinks, the Cretan Epimenides, and recalled that passage in his poem "Minos" in which occurs the line describing the relation of man to God. He recalls also the equally beautiful and true thought which the philosophic poets Aratus and Cleanthes had enshrined in noble verse, *For we are also his offspring.* Aratus, like Paul, was a native of Cilicia; both he and Cleanthes flourished about 270 B. C.

The Poet Aratus

29. *Being then the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold,* etc. We who have immaterial, immortal souls, are the offspring of God; God himself, therefore, cannot be like any material object.—*The Godhead.* Or, *that which is divine,* RVm.

30. *The times of ignorance therefore God overlooked.* Recall Paul's words at Lystra, Acts 14.16.—*Repent.* Turn back from worshipping idols.

31. *In which he will judge.* Both Epicureans and Stoics (see verse 16) rejected the idea of a future judgment and retribution.—*The man.* Or, *a man,* RVm. Jesus the Christ.

32. *We will hear thee concerning this yet again.* "But they never did! The Athenians left the discourse at the point of moral pressure. As long as Paul played the part of a Jewish Socrates they were willing to hear him. They said, with Athenian contemptuousness, 'This seed-picker seems to have picked up some new and strange God—I wonder what it is,' (verse 18). But the moment Paul flamed into moral earnestness, left the intellectual plane and came down to struggle with the heart and question it with hard interrogation, then the Athenians mocked, or with partial civility nodded to him a promise that they might come again to-morrow. We say, We will come again to-morrow. So we may, but *Paul* may not be there!" (*Parker*).

33. *Thus Paul went out from among them.* Having caused a discussion in the Areopagus and having received a polite dismissal.

34. *Dionysius the Areopagite.* A member of the Court of the Areopagus, a man of distinction. According to tradition, he was afterwards bishop of Athens, and met a martyr's death. At the foot of Mars Hill are ruins of an ancient church dedicated to Dionysius the Areopagite.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

23. *The objects of your worship.* Athens was the home of Greek philosophy and the centre of Greek worship. Petronius says that it was easier to find a god than a man in Athens; Pausanias, that there were more images in Athens than in all the rest of Greece combined; and Xenophon that the whole city was an altar, a votive offering to the gods. It could not have been long after Paul's visit to Athens that the same council of the Areopagus erected a statue to Nero, and inscribed upon the Parthenon the legend, "The Council of the Are-

opagus, and the Council of the Six Hundred, and the Athenian People (to) Emperor Greatest Nero Cæsar Claudius Augustus Germanicus, Son of God". *Lyman Abbott,* in *The Life and Letters of Paul.*

23. *To an unknown God.* Such altars were erected by those who had experienced some deliverance, and were not certain to what deity they owed the favor. According to Pausanias, a writer of the second century A. D., and Philostratus (third century A. D.) there were altars to "unknown gods" on the way from Phalerum to Athens, at Athens, and at Olympia. Professor Deissmann reads the inscription on an altar found in 1909 at Pergamum thus, "To unknown gods, Capito, torchbearer" and explains: About a century after the foundation of the Christian church at Pergamum, Capito, a priest of Demeter of Pergamum, who officiated as "torchbearer" at her mysteries, dedicated the altar to "unknown gods", having become convinced—it may be in a dream—that he was under obligation to gods whose names were not revealed to him. No doubt the Athenian inscription mentioned by Paul had beneath it the name of the one who erected it.

Worshipping the Unknown God From a Painting Entitled "Religion," in the Congressional Library

24. *The God that made the world.* The doctrine of God as Creator was strange to the Athenians, for the Epicureans held that matter was eternal and the world was the result of a chance collision of atoms; while the Stoics were pantheists, who did not regard the Divine Being who made the world as distinct from the world itself.

25. *Neither is he served by men's hands.* The heathen regarded their sacrifices as if they were gifts to their deities—presents to propitiate their favor—as if the friendship of the gods could be purchased by gifts. They were accustomed to clothe the images of the gods with splendid garments, and to minister to them in various ways. *Paton J. Gloag.*

26. *He made of one every nation of men.* Unlike the rest of Greece, the population of Athens had been stationary from time immemorial, so the Athenians prided themselves on being "autochthonous" (indigenous), and the common people believed that their fathers had literally "sprung from the soil". The assertion that God made of one every nation was a serious blow at the Greek pride in general. Very much like the Jews in this respect, the Greeks divided the world into two kinds of men—Greeks and Barbarians—and the latter were of no account. Hence it was necessary for Paul to preach to the Greeks as well as Jews the doctrine of Catholicity, and this is marked by the characteristic recurrence of the word *all.* For this teaching, indeed, the way had been prepared by the Stoics, who had taught the brotherhood of man and that all men alike are citizens of the great city of Zeus. *R. B. Rackham.*

33. *Thus Paul went out.* "Though the immediate effect of Paul's sermon was not great, the Parthenon in time became a Christian church. The repugnance of the Greeks to images became so great as to be a principal cause of the schism between the churches of the East and West in the eighth century."

34. *And a woman named Damaris.* It is not said that she was of good birth, as was stated of the women at Berœa and Thessalonica and Pisidian Antioch. The difference is true to life. It was impossible in Athenian society for a woman of respectable position and family to have an opportunity of hearing Paul; and the name Damaris suggests a foreign woman. *W. M. Ramsay.*

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. In the prayer offered upon the release of Peter and John after their arrest by the Sanhedrin, what was said about God as Creator? What did Paul say to the people of Lystra about God as Creator? In Stephen's speech what were his words about the habitation of God? In what earlier lesson did Paul say, in effect, that "the times of ignorance God overlooked"? What fact about Jesus did Paul always incorporate in his sermons?

Preaching at Athens. When forced to leave Berœa (our lesson of two weeks ago), Paul went on to Athens. While walking the streets of Athens, his spirit was provoked by the sight of so many idols, and in synagogue and in market-place, wherever Jews and proselytes would listen to him, he "preached Jesus and his resurrection". Certain of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers heard him, and some of them mocked asking, What would this babbler say? while others said that he seemed to be proclaiming strange gods. The Athenians were wont to spend all their time in telling or hearing about some new thing, Luke tells us in an aside; and so one day they laid hands on Paul and brought him to the place where the Areopagus, or Council, was meeting, and bade him explain his new teaching. Paul stood up and answered them. Pointing, no doubt, to the magnificent statues near by, he began by saying that his hearers, he perceived, were very religious. His sermon with its effect upon the people is our lesson theme.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

About four miles from the Saronic Gulf, on the Attic Plain, which is enclosed by mountains save on the south, lies Athens, leading city of Greece, or of the Roman province of Achaia, as it was called in apostolic times, that city so famous for its magnificent temples and statues, its philosophy and learning, its warriors, orators, philosophers, artists, and poets.

Journeying to Athens by boat from the Macedonian coast, Paul sailed past Eubœa, and must have thought about the Greek's brave defense of the narrow pass of Thermopylæ, and then later on about their glorious defeat of the Persians on the Plain of Marathon. He must have landed at Piræus, then as now the port of Athens, and then have walked the four miles to Athens. Reaching the city he passed beautiful marble statues of Jupiter, Mercury, Mars, Apollo, Minerva, and many other gods and goddesses; of Hercules, Theseus and many other mythological heroes; of Demosthenes and many other great orators and statesmen and warriors. Near the center of the city he came to the Agora, or market-place, an open space around which were grouped public buildings, stoas or porches, and shops. Here it was that he preached to the people, verse 17.

North of the Agora was the Areopagus, or Mars Hill, a rugged, stony hill surmounted by a temple of Mars, the God of War. The hill-top was the official session-place of the Areopagus, or Court. In verse 19 Luke tells us that Paul was led to the Areopagus, and in verse 22 that he stood in the midst of the Areopagus. Now the question is, did Luke mean by his use of the word Areopagus, the hill or the body of men who constituted the court? If he meant the hill, then it was there that Paul spoke; if he meant the Court, he may have spoken in the Agora, perhaps going to the Stoa Basileios (the royal Arcade) to escape the tumult, for it was an unofficial meeting of members of the Areopagus, philosophers who were not members, and of the general public. Tradition points out a sheltered plateau on the side of the Areopagus hill (whence rock-hewn steps lead up to the hilltop), as the place where Paul stood.

On that hillside one beautiful Sunday afternoon we listened to the reading of Paul's sermon by a member of the International Lesson Committee, and looking up to the summit of the Acropolis, or citadel, of Athens, a steep hill of solid rock three hundred feet high before us, saw the actual works of man on which Paul had gazed—the magnificent ruins of the Parthenon, the Erechtheum, the little temple of the Winged Victory—we wondered not that Paul declared "God dwelleth not in temples made with hands".

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Very familiar to you, no doubt, is the pedagogical dictum that one should proceed from the known to the unknown. Note how Paul followed this law in his address to the Athenians: "What therefore ye worship in ignorance, this I set forth unto you". Standing there before the Athenians Paul yearned to tell all he knew about Jesus Christ and his resurrection. How did he begin? He referred to that altar dedicated to the unknown God, and later he referred to the truths with which they were acquainted through the words of their own writers —"as certain of your own poets have said". He took that little bit of truth in which the Athenians believed—that there was an unknown God—and with that as a basis led them on to the thought of the one true, living God, the Creator and Father of all mankind and of Jesus Christ the Savior and Judge.

All the history of the progress of men's thought bears witness that when God wants to give men knowledge which they have not had before, he always opens it to them out of something which they have already known, observes Phillips Brooks. When God wanted to give the world the truth of Christ, he took that Hebrew nation which had some truth, truth of the right sort, though it was very meager and insufficient, and mixed up with other things which were not true; he took that truth and brought Christianity out of that. And so when he wanted to bring his Christianity, his highest truths, into any new region, he has always made it appear as the fulfillment, the completion, of what the people of that region knew already.

This is the law which you must follow in all your teaching. Have you a class of young people or adults whose religious beliefs are poor and weak and barren? Take their bit of knowledge or belief that is true and good, however meager it may be, and build thereon, leading them on to ever larger and truer conceptions of prayer and of faith, of obedience and of service, of God and of Christ.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. In very early times on a steep hill in Greece there lived a rude people. Only one narrow footpath led up to their abode, which was always guarded at the top. They lived in the caves in the earth or among the rocks; their food was the flesh of wild animals and berries. One day while hunting in the woods they found a strange youth, handsomely clad. They brought him to their hilltop to show him to the women and children, intending to kill him later, but he taught them so many things—how to make bows and arrows, how to catch fish with hooks, how to build houses of wood, etc.—that they made him their king instead. His name was Cecrops.

By and by two strangers were seen in the streets of the town that had been built on the hilltop. How they had come there no one knew, for they had not passed the sentinel at the gate to which the narrow footpath led. The strangers were brought before King Cecrops. "I am Neptune," said the man, "and I rule the sea". "I am Athena," said the woman, "and I give wisdom to men". Then Neptune promised to make them masters of the sea and possessors of great wealth if they would accept him as their protector and give his name to their town. Athena promised to give them great wisdom if they would do this for her. Some of the people cried out, "Neptune and wealth!" and others, "Athena and wisdom!" but one old man asked for a gift from each, for they could not choose since they knew neither what wealth nor wisdom meant. Neptune gave them a horse, and Athena an olive tree. The people decided that as they had no chariots and wagons and did not care to ride faster than the wind they did not care for the horse, but would choose Athena and wisdom. King Cecrops declared the name of the city to be Athens, and on the hilltop, since called the Acropolis, they erected a temple to Athena whose ruins may still be seen.

This is the old Greek fable of the origin of Athens. It is to this city that Paul has now come on his second missionary journey. As he wandered about the streets he grew very indignant at the great number of idols which he saw everywhere.

For Older Pupils. Begin with the Geographical Background.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Groping after God

Listen!

Ye whose hearts are fresh and simple,
Who have faith in God and Nature,
Who believe that in all ages
Every human heart is human,
That in even savage bosoms
There are longings, yearnings, strivings,
For the good they comprehend not,
That the feeble hands and helpless,
Groping blindly in the darkness,
Touch God's right hand in that darkness,
And are lifted up and strengthened,—
Listen! *Hiawatha.*

Feeling After should Lead to Finding. While Paul waited at Athens for the coming of Silas and Timothy, his spirit was provoked within him as he beheld the city full of idols. He perceived that the people were very religious, though the objects that they worshipped were vain. He tried to lead them from their worship of things made of gold or silver or stone, graven by art and device of man, to the worship of the true God. They were blindly groping after God; he would lead them into the glorious light of God. The following paragraph from the letter of a missionary in Burma gives the modern heathen attitude and the true Pauline solution of the problem.

One evening at sunset, when the sky was gorgeous in color, I stood at the entrance of the Sule pagoda. Going into the enclosure, I saw men and women kneeling before idols, some with flowers, some with candles or other offerings in their hands, which they uplifted before their faces in worship. Remaining in this posture, they intoned a prayer broken by intervals when the head was bowed to the ground. I asked myself how different is this prayer from that which is raised in a Christian assembly? Is it not the same human heart lifted to that which is higher, in search of hope and peace and strength? Rather than scorn their efforts, should we not try to reveal God to them?

Life-Long Quest. There is a haunting story told in a recent book about a Chinese woman's life-long quest for God. She grew up in a solitary home beside her mother who, on her father's death, had become a Taoist nun. Seeing no one but her mother, and reading only books about the three Chinese religions —Taoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism—she, too, became a nun. Four times she spent three years in succession in absolute seclusion, "seeing no one, hearing no voice, kneeling for hours every day before the shrine on which she kept three sticks of incense burning, one for each religion. She even made offerings of her own flesh to her idols, and her face and body were covered with scars".

At the age of thirty-two she allowed a cousin who was a Christian physician to visit her. To her she confessed that her life-long quest for the true God had brought her no peace. The cousin told her about God and about Christ, and persuaded her to attend in disguise a service at the Christian hospital. Her cousin's life of service amazed her. Mutely she followed her from ward to ward and sat by her side in the dispensary. The Nazarene triumphed, and she entered the Bible training school to learn that she might teach others the way to the true God. "It was too late. The long years of privation had broken down her vitality; she fell ill with tuberculosis. But the last days of her life were the happiest she had ever known. She insisted, dying though she was, on having her photograph taken, because all her other photographs were in the dress of a Taoist nun; this was to be the photograph of a Christian. A few days later, her life-long quest crowned with success at last, she went to behold the face of him who is the Truth. A tragic story? Yes, and yet how infinitely more tragic are the lives that do not find because they do not care enough to seek!"

Quapung's Prayer. Adoniram Judson, you know, was one of the first missionaries in Burma. As the boat in which he was journeying stopped at a landing-place, he saw a woman standing there; offering her his hand, he spoke to her kindly, asking her how she was. He could tarry but a few moments, and then re-entered the boat and continued his journey. This woman was a princess

and her name was Guapung. "I have seen one of the Sons of God," she reported, "I will never worship our gods again. I have served them ever since I was a child, but they have never prevented my husband from beating me. This man spoke to me kindly, and gave me his hand. His God must be *the* God". That night she offered this prayer to the unknown God of the white stranger: "Lord God, in the heavens, in the earth, in the mountains, in the seas, in the north, in the south, in the east, in the west, pity me, I pray. Show me thy glory, that I may know thee who thou art". For five years she offered this same prayer, and then a missionary came through whom she heard the gospel preached. At once she became a Christian and devoted her life to winning others for Christ.

II In Him we Live, and Move, and Have our Being

God is not Far from Each One of Us. Jacob had thought of God as dwelling only in special places where he was to be worshipped. He had not thought of finding him at Bethel, and in his surprise at having there a vision of God he exclaimed, "Surely the Lord is in this place and I knew it not!" The great truth had begun to dawn upon him that go where he would he was always in the presence of God. "God is not far from each one of us," said Paul.

> "Speak to him thou, for he hears, and spirit with spirit can meet;
> Closer he is than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet,"

counsels Tennyson, "In him we live and move and have our being."

The Athenians could not grasp that overwhelming thought, nor can we understand its great mystery. The little child who seized her father's "icy hand" and questioned,

> "Isn't God upon the ocean
> Just the same as on the land?"

had accepted it in the only way it can be accepted, in childlike trust. Gladstone, the great statesman, accepted it in the same way, and after sixty years of public life he could say, "I hold more strongly than ever to this conviction, deepened and strengthened by long experience, of the reality, the nearness, and the personality of God".

The Nearness of God. Never were people on the brink of so many of the highest things, and missed them, as these Athenians. They felt all the mystery, the mysterious suggestiveness of life. They built their altar to the unknown God. The air around them was all tremulous with power. They were always on the brink of faith, without believing; always on the brink of divine charity, yet selfish; always touched by the atmosphere of spirituality, yet with their feet set upon the material and carnal.

Paul tells them: "You are restless and discontented. You are always seeming to be near something which yet you do not reach. Your feet are always pressing the brink of a knowledge which you never come to know. You are always half aware of something which you never see. I will tell you what it means. Your restlessness, your impatience, your discontent, however petty be the forms it takes, is solemn and not petty to me, because of what it means. It means that God is not far from every one of you".

The man who, two hundred years ago, would have seen his brethren around him coming to Christ, and have sat down in submissive or sullen misery, saying, "Well, there is no chance for me. Others are called but I am non-elect",—that same man now, catching the tone of the age, looks round upon the praying and believing multitude, and says more or less sadly, but with no more real self-reproach than the soul which recognized its reprobation: "Religion is a thing of temperament, and I am non-religious". Against them both, protesting that both are false and shallow views of this solemn human life of ours,—against them both, whether souls are hiding in them as excuses, or crushed under them as burdens, there stands the everlasting, simple Bible truth of the universal nearness of God; "He is not far from every one of us".

And just as soon as men really get below the surface, and have broken through the superficial look and current theories of things, and really have come to real study of their own spiritual lives, I believe that it is absolutely true that they always find that there is nothing which so meets the story of their lives,

nothing which can so explain themselves to themselves, as this, which you may call at first an hypothesis if you will, but which verifies itself to us as all hypotheses must verify themselves, by the way in which it meets the facts which have to be explained; the hypothesis of God present with and always trying to work upon our souls, to make them good, pure, strong, true, brave; unseen by us, but always close to us; and, because he is God, always working, always hindered by our ignorance, our obstinacy, our wickedness, but never discouraged, never turning away, doing all that omnipotent love can do upon unwilling human souls to make them live to him.

This is what Belief means. Not the far-off search for a distant God, but the turning, the looking, the trusting, to a God who has been always present, who is present now. *Condensed* from *Seeking Life,* by *Phillips Brooks.*

God not in All their Thoughts. I wonder if Paul was taking a special trip around Athens to see the statuary when he ran across that marble-cut dedication, "To the Unknown God". If he were living in this twentieth century instead of the first, and were in San Francisco, I believe he would spare the time to take a look at the sculpture of this Western town on the ocean's edge. From the Donoghue forge-workers, down near the Ferry building, to the "Forty-niners" in the Civic Square, or the figure of Victory in Union Square, or the base-ball player in Golden Gate Park, every piece of bronze seems quivering with life and action.

San Francisco with all its natural glory of house-covered hills, and bay macadamized with liquid gold from the setting sun, and people worshipping at the shrine of beauty, is the most care-free and dare-devil city in the world. God seems not to be in all their thoughts. It was only a few days after the earthquake, and while their houses were still a mass of smouldering ashes, that five thousand San Franciscans assembled in the open-air Greek theater across the bay and heard Sarah Bernhardt play Phædre.

The Continental Sunday prevails in San Francisco, the theaters and pictures drawing their tens of thousands, while the churches draw their hundreds.

The religious statistics of San Francisco are startling. The city has in round numbers 500,000 inhabitants. Of this number only thirty and a half per cent. is claimed as Christian—twenty-six per cent. Catholic, and four and a half per cent. Protestant, while the remainder, or sixty-nine and a half per cent., have no church connection.

San Francisco has had more than its share of upheavals—upheavals moral and physical; upheavals of civic righteousness after being submerged in tidal waves of crime; three appalling upheavals by fire and one by earthquake. But it has never been stirred to its depths by a great religious upheaval. It says of itself: "I am so peculiar, I am of such an artistic temperament, that I could never go to the mourners' bench as a penitent". But who will doubt that God has very many people for his Name among the fine-tempered, care-free, flower-loving, hospitable people of the Pacific metropolis? *Condensed* from an *Article* in the *Sunday School Times,* by *Howard A. Banks.*

You and I are Children of God. Whether we know him or not, whether we love him or not, whether we are conscious of him or not, we *are* his children —every one of us; and within every one of us there is some sort of witness to our kinship with him. *Dr. Lyman Abbott,* in *The Life That Really Is.*

The Practice of the Presence of God. Nicholas Herman was an awkward, uneducated lad who was born in Lorraine in the seventeenth century. He entered a monastery, but because he broke everything he touched he was put into the kitchen to wash the kettles and pots and pans. He had a calm belief in the presence of God with him everywhere and at all times, and his very countenance showed that God's presence was more real to him than aught else. Men traveled long distances to talk with him in his kitchen. "The time of business does not differ with me from the time of prayer," he told them, "and in the noise and clatter of my kitchen, while several persons are at the same time calling for different things, I possess God in as great tranquility as if I were upon my knees at the sacrament".

In one of his published letters he wrote: "Were I a preacher, I should above all other things, preach the practice of the presence of God...so necessary do I think it, and so easy, too". "The Practice of the Presence of God" is the title given to the record of his words.

"The way to realize the Divine Presence is to practice it, to believe it, and put it to the test," says *The Wellspring.* "Suppose we begin tomorrow morning and try all day to live as if Christ were visible with us. It will keep us patient and sweet at breakfast time, even if the cereal has been scorched, or something has gone wrong in the kitchen. It will keep us kind and gentle when people jostle against us and do not do just as we would have them do. It will make us strong to endure temptation when we are put to the test in any way. We will do our work better, more honestly, more conscientiously, more skillfully, because the eye of the Master is on us. It should be possible to practice the presence of Christ for one little day. If we do this we can do it a second day, and then a third day. It will bring a new power into our lives, new energy, new fidelity, new joy."

III The Relation of Christianity to Eastern Religions

The Apostolic Method. One of the most serious questions before us today is this: What is the relation of Christianity to those other great religions of the world which command, like hers, the adhesion of millions of the human race? One is apt to go to India or any foreign field, as I humbly confess I did, with the preconceived idea that the great bulk of our foreign missionaries' work must consist of argument and apologetic, that truths of natural religion, texts of the Scriptures, history of Christianity in the world and her present wonderful works, formed the staple of discourses able to prove the falseness of all other religions, and the claims of Christianity to be the one Divine system of faith and of morals. Now, this intellectual and historical presentation of our religion must, of course, have its place in missions, to people of the mental level of the Hindu. But I came across wonderfully little of it indeed. Instead of that, I found everywhere the preaching of Christianity alike to the educated and uneducated native, alike to the native and our own countryman, which was predominantly ethical and spiritual. I found this preaching not attacking other religions nor arguing for Christianity as a system, but engaging itself with the essential needs and universal sins of our common nature, appealing everywhere to that conscience and heart with which every man has been born into the world, and effecting numerous conversions through a conviction of sin, repentance and faith in Jesus Christ as the Savior from sin and power of new life unto God—in fact, just the same methods as made Christianity at first a power in the world, and which still produces her most real effects among us Western people of today. I could give many instances of it, but my time is too short to say more than this: that I found among the missions of all Christian denominations, from Calcutta to Bombay and Peshwar, Congregational, Presbyterian, Anglican, Methodist and Baptist alike, that the notes of the preaching were the same, and the notes were the notes of Apostolic Christianity. From a *Sermon* by *Dr. George Adam Smith.*

It is Needful to Preach Jesus and the Resurrection to Those Holding the Various Pagan Faiths. The students of comparative religion remind us of the divine doctrines found in the ethnic scriptures; they abundantly prove that these scriptures contain many great truths expressed with remarkable lucidity and beauty. But those best acquainted with the East declare that these ancient faiths no longer serve the nations which hold them; they are practically dead as far as concerns any influence they might once have exerted upon the moral and spiritual life of the people. It is, then, only as the truths implied in the resurrection of Christ are proclaimed that these incomplete and inoperative faiths will reach their consummation. It was by this thought that St. Paul was guided in dealing with the Athenians. He recognized the merit and failure of their natural theology, and preached "Jesus and the resurrection" as the fullness of the truth after which they were striving. So will it be with the present moribund faiths of the oriental nations: they will find their consummation in becoming related to the gospel of the resurrection. Only as the Christian missionary tells of the love of God who gave his Son to die for our sins, of his rising from the grave for our justification; of the power of the ascended Lord to raise us from the death of sin to the life of righteousness; of the eternal blessedness which awaits the believer through union with him who is the Resurrection and the Life—only as these truths are told out with convic-

tion and love will the creeds of Paganism awake to a higher life and efficacy. Whatever in them is false will be purged; whatever is true will be energized; whatever is partial will be completed. Christ "came not to destroy, but to fulfill"; and as he raised Judaism into a spiritual and heavenly glory, so will he swallow up the great native faiths of Paganism in an excelling glory of truth and grace. The splendid change that passed over the faith of the Jew will pass over the faith of the Parsee, the Buddhist, the Confucian, the Mohammedan! *Dr. W. L. Watkinson,* in *The Fatal Barter.*

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

God is not served by men's hands as though he needed anything. Some there are who look upon their church attendance, their prayer and their praise, as a service done to God. He needs them not, but they need them: through their worship they lift up their souls to him.

It is an inspiring doctrine, this truth that God is everywhere, that he is not far from each one of us. Do we realize his presence? Does our faith make him real, an ever present Guide in our daily lives?

There are multitudes now who are groping blindly to find God, but to them he is still an Unknown God. Are we helping to make him known to these our brothers?

Our Prayer. O God, we thank thee that thou art not to us "an unknown God". We rejoice in our knowledge that thou art, and that thou art our Father. We thank thee that we know we are thy children, to whom thou art ever near, guiding and strengthening and sustaining us. For thy children in heathen lands who are blindly seeking to find thee we pray. May we never fail to help by prayer and with money those who are striving to bring them to the knowledge of thee and the joy of serving thee.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The nearness of God. See the Second Topic and Chapter III of "Seeking Life", by Phillips Brooks.

2. Paul's address and the faiths of non-Christian peoples. Have the Chinese enough religion of their own? See the Third Topic, and *The Missionary Review of the World,* March, 1912, p. 177.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. Who was Claudius? 2. Why did Claudius drive the Jews from Rome? (*Guide,* p. 290.) 3. What great games were celebrated near Corinth? (*Guide,* p. 294.) 4. What was the Jewish custom in regard to the learning of a trade? (*Guide,* p. 291.) 5. 2 Cor. 11.9 and Phil. 4.15 tell us why Paul was not long compelled to labor as a tent maker; why was it? 6. What further are we told about Aquila and Priscilla? (*Guide,* p. 291.) 7. What light does Neh. 5.13 throw upon the meaning of the symbolical act of verse 6? 8. By what symbolic action did Pilate signify that he was guiltless of the shedding of Christ's blood? 9. What did Paul say in 1 Cor. 2.1-2 about the theme of his preaching among the Corinthians? 10. What were the closing events of Paul's second missionary journey? (*Guide,* p. 292.) 11. Name in order the places visited by Paul on his second Missionary Journey. 12. Where did he found churches on this Journey? 13. What two letters did Paul write while at Corinth? (*Guide,* p. 31.) 14. Where was Paul when he wrote his letters to the Corinthians? (*Guide,* pp. 34, 36.) 15. On your map continue Paul's course to Athens.

Questions to Think About. 1. What is the meaning of "reasoned" and "persuaded", verse 4? 2. What is the meaning of "was constrained by the word", verse 3? 3. What episode in the life of Elijah does the last clause of verse 10 recall? (*Guide,* p. 291.) 4. Name some of the people in the Bible who worked with their hands. 5. Is it any more honorable to preach than to make tents? 6. Do you think every one should know how to do some kind of work well, even if he does not need to work? Why?

Memory and Note-Book Work. Memorize Dr. Van Dyke's stanza about "The Gospel of Labor", p. 295. or Angela Morgan's "Work: A Song of Triumph", p. 295. Write Chapter IX, at Athens.

PAUL AT CORINTH

Golden Text

Be not afraid, but speak and hold not thy peace. Acts 18.9

LESSON Acts 18.1-22: verses 1-11 printed MEMORIZE verses 9, 10

1 After these things he departed from Athens, and came to Corinth. 2 And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, a man of Pontus by race, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome: and he came unto them; 3 and because he was of the same trade, he abode with them, and they wrought; for by their trade they were tent-makers. 4 And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded Jews and Greeks.

5 But when Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, Paul was constrained by the word, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ. 6 And when they opposed themselves and blasphemed, he shook out his raiment and said unto them, Your blood *be* upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles. 7 And he departed thence, and went into the house of a certain man named Titus Justus, one that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue. 8 And Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized. 9 And the Lord said unto Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak and hold not thy peace: 10 for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to harm thee: for I have much people in this city. 11 And he dwelt *there* a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

I. At the Home of Aquila, 1-6.
  1. Manual Labor, 1-3.
  2. Preaching in the Synagogue, 4, 5.
  3. The Gospel Rejected, 6.
II. At the Home of Titus Justus, 7-11.
  1. The Gospel Received, 7, 8.
  2. Divinely Encouraged, 9-11.
III. Brought before Gallio, 12-17.
IV. Homeward Bound, 18-22.

1, 2. *After these things.* After the events at Athens.—*Lately come from Italy.* May it not have been through the influence of this Aquila that Paul formed the determination that he "must see Rome"?—*Claudius.* He succeeded Caligula as Emperor of Rome in 41 A. D.—*Had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome.* That this edict was not permanently enforced, we know from the Acts. It was in 61 B. C. that Pompey brought Jewish prisoners to Rome, and since then the Jewish settlement had grown rapidly. Tiberius had deported four thousand Roman Jews to Sardinia "in the hope that the malaria might kill them". Claudius was indebted to Herod Agrippa, of Jerusalem, for helping him in gaining the throne, and on that account he had granted many favors to Roman Jews. Then when the Jewish zealots of Judea revolted against the Roman yoke, it was not deemed safe to permit their kindred to remain in the imperial city. Another reason is given by Suetonius, in his life of the Emperor Claudius,—"because they were in a state of continual tumult at the instigation of one Chrestus". It is thought that by *Chrestus, Christus,* Christ is meant, and that the Romans hearing the name *Christus* so often, supposed it to be that of one of the leaders of the Jews. Suetonius no doubt means (as Samuel Cox in "An Expositor's Note Book" explains) that the dissensions between

Jews and Christians had already risen to such a height as to attract public attention, and appear to threaten the public peace. Yet when the Jews were expelled from Rome scarcely twenty years had elapsed since the death of Christ. St. Paul did not arrive in Rome till ten years after this date. No other apostle had been there. The good seed had sprung up of itself. The great Roman Church was founded we know not how. But for the casual phrase of a heathen historian we should not have known that it was a strong, zealous church in the days of Emperor Claudius.

3. *By their trade they were tentmakers.* See Light from Oriental Life. Perhaps they wove the cloth as well as made it into tents. Cary was like Paul in this: "My business is preaching the Gospel", he said: "I cobble shoes to pay expenses".

4. *Reasoned.* Preached.—*Persuaded.* Greek, *sought to persuade,* RVm.

5. *But when Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia.* Recall Acts 17. 14-16 and read 1 Thess. 3.1, 2, 6.—*Paul was constrained by the word.* "He surrendered himself to the constraint of the word, *i. e.* the necessity to preach the gospel. The A. V. gives—though probably not the right reading—the right sense, he was pressed in spirit" (*Rackham*). Another reason for Paul's giving his time to preaching now was that Silas and Timothy brought money with them (2 Cor. 11.9; Phil. 4.15), and there was less need for Paul's toiling with his hands.—*Testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ.* "And I, brethren," Paul wrote to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 2.1-2), "when I came unto you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God: for I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified".

6. *When they opposed themselves.* The Greek verb means literally they *set themselves in battle array.—Blasphemed. Railed,* RVm. "They could not argue against it, but what was wanting in reason they made up in ill language" (*Matthew Henry*).—*He shook out his raiment.* Recall his similar symbolic action at Antioch of Pisidia, Acts 13.51. Compare Neh. 5.13: I shook out my lap, and said, So God shake out every man from his house that performeth not this promise. By this gesture Paul indicated that he would have nothing more to do with them.—*Your blood be upon your own heads: I am clean.* This was a solemn assertion of lack of responsibility as to their fate. Compare Pilate's words at the trial of Jesus, Mt. 27.24, 25. They had judged themselves unworthy of eternal life, as he had told the Jews at Antioch of Pisidia.—*From henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles.* He referred here only to his stay at Corinth, as he had referred only to his stay at Antioch of Pisidia; we next hear of him speaking to the Jews at Ephesus.

7. *He departed thence.* From the synagogue, verse 4.—*One that worshipped God.* A Gentile proselyte.

8. *Many of the Corinthians believed and were baptized.* Crispus and Gaius were baptized by Paul himself, 1 Cor. 1.14.

9. *And the Lord said unto Paul in the night by a vision.* "He passed from the strife of tongues into the presence of the Eternal Friend" (*Plumptre*). Compare Acts 22.17; 27.23.—*Be not afraid.* Even Paul the dauntless had his times of depression when he needed encouragement.

10. *I am with thee.* See Mt. 28.20.—*For I have much people in this city.* Evidently Paul had become depressed because God's cause did not prosper more rapidly, and his mission seemed to him a failure, even as had Elijah's, and like Elijah, he learned that there were many who were not bowing the knee to idols.

11. *He dwelt there a year and six months.* When Paul went to Ephesus Aquila and Priscilla went with him (verse 18) and there remained. It was through their words that Apollos was converted, verse 26, and it was at their house that the church met, 1 Cor. 16.19. Before Paul went to Rome they went back there, and again had the Church meet regularly with them, Rom. 16.3-5. From 2 Tim. 4.19 we know that they once more made their home in Ephesus.—*Teaching the word of God among them.* He also wrote during this time his two letters to the Thessalonians.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

3. *By their trade they were tent-makers.* The rabbinical law required every Jewish father, however rich he might be, to teach his son some manual trade.

"He that teaches not his son a trade, does the same as if he taught him to be a thief," said Rabbi Judah. Rabbi Hillel was a woodcutter by trade; Rabbi Shammai a carpenter. Paul was a native of Tarsus in Cilicia, and he learned the local industry, the weaving into cloth of goat's hair (called *cilicium* after Cilicia) and the making of the cloth into tents. Paul supported himself by his trade at Thessalonica (1 Thess. 2.9; 2 Thess. 3.8) and Ephesus (Acts 20.34) as well as at Corinth.

"Tent making is an important occupation in Western Asia at the present time," says Van Lennep. "In all the large cities, and especially in Constantinople, there is a portion of the bazar, or business part of the town, entirely devoted to this branch of industry. Here men may be seen engaged in cutting and sewing canvas, in constructing or finishing off tents of various forms and sizes, in mending and repairing those long used, or packing them up for their customers."

Professor Deissmann records a phrase which he found on the tombstone of a humble man of the early Empire, in a country district nor far from the home of Paul, in the south-west of Asia Minor: Daphnos, the best among the gardeners, has raised for himself a hero's resting-place, and now has reached the goal, "after that he had much labored".

8. *The ruler of the synagogue.* In the temple synagogue the ruler was the third officer in rank; the first officer being the high priest, and the second the chief of the priests. In provincial synagogues the ruler was supreme. No one was eligible to this office until he had a certificate from the Great Sanhedrin that he possessed the requisite qualifications. His election was by the members of the synagogue. It was his duty to supervise all matters connected with worship. *Freeman.*

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. What was the result of Paul's work in Athens? In what mood must he have been when he left Athens? In what city had Paul and Barnabas shaken off the dust of their feet? What did this symbolize? To whom did Paul say: "It was necessary that the word of God should first be spoken to you. Seeing ye thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles"? What great prophet of our last year's lessons became terribly discouraged because God had so few people and how was he heartened? What have we heard about the people from Pontus?

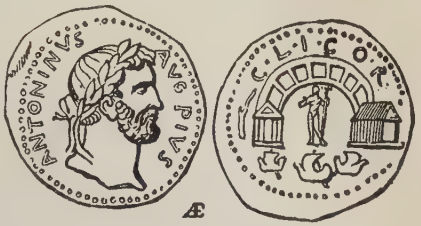
Paul at Corinth. Luke does not tell us why Paul left Athens and went on to Corinth, and the account which he gives of Paul's work in Corinth, where he spent eighteen months—a longer time than in any other city save Ephesus—comprises only eighteen verses of Acts.

The opposition of the Jews increased until they haled Paul before Gallio, the newly arrived proconsul of Achaia. It is interesting to recall that this Gallio was a brother of Seneca, and that Seneca said of him: "You can hardly think that a man could look with such gentleness upon any single soul as my brother Gallio can look upon all mankind". They accused him of proclaiming an unlawful worship. Gallio refused to consider the matter. "If it were a matter of wrong or of wicked villainy" he would have heard the case, but he was "not minded to be a judge" of questions pertaining to their own law. When the Corinthians beat Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, Gallio, indifferent to all Jewish strife, left him to the mob.

From an inscription found on a stone at Delphi, in 1908, in which Gallio is mentioned as proconsul, Professor Deissmann gathers that Gallio entered upon his office in the summer of 51 A. D. If the accusation of Paul took place soon afterwards, after he had been working for about eighteen months at Corinth, he must have reached Corinth early in the year 50. These dates are at variance with most chronological theories.

The Close of Paul's Second Missionary Journey. The time came for Paul to bid his Corinthian converts good-bye; we may well understand that he urged them to remain steadfast in their faith, commended them to God's care, and promised them letters and a speedy return. Then with Aquila and Priscilla he set sail from the harbor of Cenchreæ and crossed the Ægean Sea to Ephesus. There he left his two companions, but did not yield to the entreaties of the Jews

in whose synagogue he preached that he himself tarry longer, for he was desirous of spending the coming Passover with the Christian community at Jerusalem. Promising to come again if God so willed, he sailed to Cæsarea, and then journeyed on to Jerusalem. Here he celebrated the Passover, reported the results of his missionary labors and returned, by way of Cæsarea no doubt, to Antioch in Syria, which he had left four years earlier on his second missionary journey.



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Coin of Corinth. On one side Head of Antoninus Pius; on the other, the Port of Cenchreæ with Statue of Neptune in Center, a Temple at each end, and Ships below

Review of the Second Missionary Journey, 51-55 A. D. From Antioch in Syria Paul's journey took him first to the cities he had visited in Asia Minor on his first Journey—Tarsus, Derbe, and Lystra, those in the region of Phrygia and Galatia, and then on to Troas, where he had his call to enter Europe. Sailing from Troas to Neapolis, he went on to Philippi. There Lydia and her husband were the first to believe his message. There he restored the soothsaying maid to her right mind, and there he and Silas were beaten and imprisoned, and the jailor was converted. Passing through Amphipolis and Apollonia, Paul next proclaimed Jesus the Christ at Thessalonica, "turning the world upside down", as his enemies said. Compelled to leave, Paul went to Berœa, where the people received the word with readiness of mind, examining the scriptures daily whether these things were so. Driven out once again by his enemies Paul went to Athens and made known to the Athenians him whom they were ignorantly worshipping. From Athens he went to Corinth, and thence returned to Antioch in Syria by way of Ephesus, Jerusalem and Cæsarea. On this journey Paul established churches at Philippi, Thessalonica, Berœa, Athens and Corinth.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Turn to your map and study the country of Greece. Notice the narrow isthmus which connects the Peloponnesus with the mainland, separating the Saronic Gulf (of the Ægean Sea) from the Gulf of Corinth (of the Adriatic). Then notice the location of Corinth, dominating the Isthmus: "The City of the Two Seas" it was poetically called. It is about fifty miles from Athens to Corinth. There was no canal across the Isthmus in Paul's day, though Julius Cæsar, Hadrian, and Caligula had all considered the project, and Nero, at the very time of our lesson, had begun the undertaking, though he soon gave it up. Boats were dragged the four miles across the Isthmus to avoid the stormy passage around the peninsula.

Corinth was the capital of the Roman province of Achaia (Greece), and its location made it the chief commercial city as well. It was a beautiful city, the glory of Greece in Paul's day. Towering over the plain was the great rock of Acrocorinthus, the citadel of Corinth, whence one has one of the most superb views in the world. Famous in legend and song, in wealth and commerce, in luxury and vice, was this city of four hundred thousand inhabitants. Only the few giant columns of the Temple of Apollo, which was a magnificent temple in Paul's day, have long marked the site of the ancient city. In 1896 The American School of Archæology began excavation, and now we can walk upon a marble-paved street (with the ruins of sixteen shops on one side) over which Paul must have walked, and can stand beside the ruins of the fountain which was then beautifully adorned.

Pontus, whence Aquila came, was a Roman province of Asia Minor bordering the Black Sea. Recall Acts 2.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

In the last verses of this chapter we hear about Apollos. He was a great Bible student, knowing the Old Testament thoroughly, and he had learned some things

accurately about Jesus the Christ. He was an eloquent speaker, evidently a trained orator, and was fervent in spirit, an enthusiastic Christian worker. Yet this able and brilliant man of many gifts had to sit at the feet of Aquila and Priscilla, humble tent-makers though they were, and learn from their deeper Christian experience many things of which he knew nothing. The record tells us that they took him to themselves and expounded unto him the way of God more accurately.

A teacher may be blessed with great natural gifts, but they can not take the place of deep spiritual experience. This explains why some humble saints are better Sunday-school teachers than some gifted, trained workers.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. A young man came to visit the monk Macarius and found him weaving a mat. "What," exclaimed the youth, "do you work for food that perishes?" The monk did not answer him, but handed him a book and bade him sit down and read. Noon came, and instead of being invited as a guest to eat he was told that in the cloister the apostolic rule held good—"If any will not work, neither let him eat". This was the rule which the apostle Paul wrote from Corinth to the Church at Thessalonica. What work was Paul himself doing at this time at Corinth? Our lesson shows us the great apostle sitting in a dusty workroom, the same hand which wrote so many of the New Testament Epistles filled with goat's hair which he is weaving into a coarse cloth for tents. Who are working with him?

For Older Pupils. Possibly you may have been fortunate enough to sit in the "Yale Bowl" or the "Harvard Stadium" and with thousands of others watch breathlessly the outcome of a great collegiate foot-ball game. Has it ever occurred to you that the apostle Paul found similar pleasure in the great stadium at the site now called Isthmia, a few miles from Corinth, and also in the one at Athens? You are all familiar with the International Olympian games which have been revived recently at Athens, and have seen pictures of the imposing stadium built on the old site which holds 90,000. The Isthmian games were held every other year and we know that one was held in the year 53, when we believe Paul was at Corinth. *Isthmia* is the Greek for *Isthmus,* and the Isthmian Games were the games held on the Isthmus. Boxing, wrestling, gladiatorial combats, throwing the discus, all had their place in the contests. But races were the most exciting and most keenly watched. We know that Paul enjoyed those races because of the many figures of speech which he uses. He does not hold his life dear unto him, "so that he may accomplish his course". Again he says, "Know ye not that they that run in a race run all, but one only receiveth the prize?" Again he alludes to these games in the familiar lines: "Forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal, unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus". How large a city was Corinth when Paul came there? What sort of city was it?

LESSON THOUGHTS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I The Dignity of Labor

Study to Work with Your Hands. The negroes of East Africa are wont to say that "The white man works, the black man does not; the white man is a common man, the black man is a gentleman". The ancient Greeks and Romans had slaves to do their work, and deemed manual labor beneath the dignity of a free-born citizen. "Manual labor is dishonorable," Cicero declared.

Wholly different was the belief and practice of the Jews and early Christians. Jesus Christ himself sanctified toil. His early years were spent in a carpenter's home, and no doubt he himself labored at this trade. Both by his example and by his teaching he enjoined a life of labor—physical or mental—upon his followers. "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," are his comforting words, but the rest is not idle ease, but a strengthening, a renewing for further strenuous labor. Jesus never lived a day in idleness himself. Recall one of those days recorded in the Gospels: how after a night of toil on the Lake he ceaselessly healed the sick, delivered the

possessed, preached to the multitudes, and taught his disciples. During all his public ministry, he identified himself with those who toiled. Beautifully has Dr. Henry Van Dyke expressed this:

They who tread the path of labor, follow where my feet have trod,
They who work without complaining, do the holy will of God,
Where the weary toil together, there am I among my own,
Where the tired workman sleepeth, there am I with him alone.
This is the Gospel of Labor—sing it, ye bells of the Kirk,
The Lord of Love came down from above to live with the men who work.

The apostle Paul was one of the world's greatest workers—whether at work with his hands, laboring at his trade of a tent-maker, or in the work of the ministry, preaching or writing letters to his churches, he was never idle. "Study to work with your hands even as we charged you," and "If any will not work, neither let him eat", was his advice to the Thessalonians.

The Joy of Manly Contest. George announced to his father his decision not to go to college, because it would mean too much work and worry to get ready for the examinations, as told in a recent story. "What will you do instead?" questioned his father. "Oh, go to work somewhere," replied George, as though that meant ready money and easy times. His father reminded him that going to work would mean early rising, long hours, and remaining an errand boy or a porter or, at most, a clerk on small pay unless he worked harder than he had ever had to work at school.

George sighed dismally. "It's work, work, everywhere, and I hate work!" His father turned upon him sharply. "If you forget everything else I have ever told you," he said, "at least remember what I tell you now: The man who hates work goes through life with a ball and chain dragging after him. He has a curse upon him that blasts his life. The hoboes and the tramps are haters of work. Sneak-thieves and thugs and worse are haters of work. So are most of the men at the bottom of the industrial scale. They hated work, and dodged it, and slighted what they *had* to do, and did just enough to hold their jobs, and they *stay* at the bottom, hating work still!"

Suddenly his father's tone changed. "When we saw the football game at Cambridge last year," he asked, "do you remember the inscription on the Stadium, 'Dedicated to the joy of manly contest'? Learn that 'joy of manly contest' *with hard work*, my boy! Don't run away from work, George! Don't be afraid of it! Meet it bravely, with the joy of manly contest in your heart, and day by day you will begin to find the struggle good, and out of it will come one of the supremely great and enjoyable things of life!"

George sat quiet for a time. Then his jaw closed with a snap. "I'm going to begin right now," he said, "and I'm going to know what this chapter's about!"

Thank God for Work. Angela Morgan has written an inspiring poem entitled "Work: A Song of Triumph". Here is the first stanza. You will be repaid in looking up the entire poem in the *Outlook* for Dec. 2, 1914.

Work!
Thank God for the might of it,
The ardor, the urge, the delight of it—
Work that springs from the heart's desire,
Setting the soul and the brain on fire.
Oh, what is so good as the heat of it,
And what is so glad as the beat of it,
And what is so kind as the stern command
Challenging brain and heart and hand?

II Be not Afraid, but Speak

Paul's Mood. Paul was intensely human. As Professor Ramsay says of him in "Pauline and Other Studies": "He is the typical, the representative man, who attains in moments of higher vision and inspiration to behold the truth, to commune with the Divine nature. He has, too, far more of such visions than other men. They are the greatest glory of his life, in which he might reasonably take pride. But one feels that with Paul the vision lasted no long time. It was present with him only for a moment, and then he was once more on the level of humanity. Yet that, after all, is why Paul is so close to us."

A careful reading of our lesson text for to-day discloses a discouraged note. When he first came to Corinth he reasoned in the synagogue only on the Sabbath, and it was not till Silas and Timothy joined him that he was "constrained by the word". In 2 Thess. 3.1, 2, written from Corinth, Paul asked the Thessalonians to pray for him, that he might be "delivered from unreasonable and evil men". The language used in the vision that came to him implies that Paul was disheartened, tempted to keep silence, and in need of special Divine encouragement. "Be not afraid, but speak and hold not thy peace: for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to harm thee."

The reasons for Paul's depression are not far to seek. He had been in trouble and danger ever since, in obedience to his vision at Troas, he had crossed over into Europe. He was weighed down with anxiety in regard to the steadfastness of the converts in Macedonia, as his letter to the Thessalonians shows, he missed the sympathy and assistance of Silas and Timothy, his work at Athens had been productive of little result, the city of Corinth was renowned for its wickedness, and his bodily strength was depleted. "I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling," are his own words in 1 Cor. 2.3. Many have seen in his words of 1 Cor. 2.1-2 a recoil from his philosophic address at Athens. Professor Ramsay puts it thus: "And I, brethren, when I came among you, came not announcing in superior language (as a rhetorican) or in superior wisdom (as a philosopher) the mysterious nature of God (as a King reserved for the initiated few); for I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified".

"I should think you would have been utterly discouraged," remarked a friend who had been listening to a missionary's account of her first days in the foreign village where she had gone to labor. "Oh, but you know I was not there to be discouraged," was her wise answer. Paul had not gone on his missionary tour to be discouraged, and when Silas and Timothy came he was again "constrained", wholly possessed by and engrossed in his work.

The Lesson of Paul's Mood. We have in this great champion of the faith, in this strong runner of the Christian race, in this chief of men, an example of the fluctuation of mood, the variation in the way in which we look at our duties and our obligations and our difficulties, the slackening of the impulse which dominates our lives, that is too familiar to us all. It brings Paul nearer to feel that he, too, knew these ups and downs. The force that drove this meteor through the darkness varied, as the force that impels us varies to our consciousness. It is the prerogative of God to be immutable: men have their moods and their fluctuations. Kindled lights flicker: the sun burns steadily. An Elijah of today beards Ahab and Jezebel and all their priests, and tomorrow hides his head and says, "Take me away, I am not better than my fathers". There will be ups and downs in the Christian vigor of our lives, as well as in all other religions, as long as men dwell in this material body and are surrounded by their present circumstances.

No human hand has ever drawn an absolutely straight line. That is the ideal of the mathematician, but all ours are crooked. But we may indefinitely diminish the magnitude of the curves. No two atoms are so close together that there is no film between them. No human life has ever been an absolutely continuous, unbroken series of equally holy and devoted thoughts and acts, but we may diminish the intervals between kindred states, and may make our lives so far uniform as that to a bystander they shall look like the bright circle which a brand whirled round in the air makes the impression of on the eye that beholds. We shall have times of brightness and of less brilliancy of vigor and of consequent reaction and exhaustion. But Christianity has for one of its objects to help us to master our moods, and to bring us nearer and nearer, by continual growth, to the steadfast, unmovable attitude of those whose faith is ever the same. *Alexander Maclaren.*

III Christianizing a Great City

Paul's Success in the Great Worldly, Dissolute, Corrupt City of Corinth. Corinth was more wicked than Athens. Besides the Greeks there were many Romans, a strong garrison—for it was the capital of the province and seat of the proconsul—large numbers of Jews, many industrial workers, adventurers, slaves and sailors. Where much is earned, much also is spent, and the sailors

especially, who after a season of hard toil spent their wages here, lived in accordance with the heathen saying—Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die. Into this whirlpool of men who ran hither and thither for work and for pleasure, Paul enters. What will he accomplish? Will the sight of such luxury and vice make him despair of ever winning here souls for Christ? But his own loyalty and love for his Master, and compassion for the lost, constrained him to make known the message of salvation; the result could be left to the blessing of God. And how richly God did bless his sowing of the seed!

"Nobody noticed a plain man walking along the street of Corinth one day, travel-stained and weary. Yet his coming into Corinth meant more for that city than the entrance of any other man in the city's whole history. He brought the gospel there, and the gospel is the power of God wherever it goes." As Dr. Henry T. Sell writes: "Paul's success refutes the idea that Christianity, if rightly preached, cannot make its way in the commercial city in its center and worst parts. It also disproves the oft-repeated statement that our religion can only hope to make any large gain through its appeal to children and youth. In Corinth, art, architecture, abundance of money, intellectual and physical culture, had done their best, and had failed to ennoble humanity. Paul preached, Cleanse first the heart, get the man right, let him believe in and rely upon his Savior, and all else will follow. How long is it going to take to have us put our trust in and apply these great truths and principles to modern municipal evil conditions?"

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

Paul and Jesus Christ dignified labor. See to it that you shall so live your lives that you, too, shall dignify labor.

The Jews at Corinth spurned their opportunity to accept Jesus. Whatever opportunities may come to you hereafter, this particular opportunity to accept Jesus as your Savior will not come again.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Paul's preaching at Corinth. Read the summary of the Gospel message given in 1 Cor. 15.1-11. See Chapter VI of "The Life and Letters of St. Paul" by Dr. Lyman Abbott. See the Third Topic.

2. The dignity and joy of labor. See the First Topic; "The Joy of Work," by Maltbie D. Babcock; "Work," by Hugh Black; "Self-Support in the Mission Field," *International Review of Missions,* April, 1915.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. What other translations for "perish" and "are saved", verse 18, are given in the margin of your Bible? 2. What light do Paul's words in Rom. 1.16 throw upon his meaning of "us who are saved", verse 18? 3. Where is the quotation in verse 19 written? 4. What did the Jews think of the one theme of Paul's preaching? 5. What did the clever Greeks think of it? 6. What does Paul say in 2 Cor. 2.16 are the opposite effects produced by proclaiming the doctrine of the cross? 7. What is said about asking for "signs" in Mt. 12.38; 16.4? 8. When did certain Greeks ask to see Jesus? (Jn. 12.20, 21.) 9. When did Jesus thank God for having concealed things from the wise and prudent, and having revealed them unto babes? 10. On your map continue Paul's course to Corinth.

Questions to Think About. 1. What is meant by "the word of the cross"? (*Guide,* p. 298). 2. What is the meaning of verse 21? (*Guide,* p. 299.) 3. Why was "Christ crucified" a stumbling-block to the Jews? 4. Who are "the called", verse 24? (*Guide,* p. 299.) 5. What did Paul mean by "the foolishness of God", verse 25? (*Guide,* p. 299.) 6. How would you characterize the Corinthian church membership, instead of using Paul's words of verse 26? 7. Why is the neuter "things" used for persons in verse 27? (*Guide,* p. 299.) 8. What was Paul's one purpose in preaching? 9. What was his one subject? 10. What is the meaning of our Golden Text? 11. Why is it chosen for this lesson?

Memory and Note-Book Work. Memorize 1 Cor. 1.22-31. Write Chapter X, At Corinth.

THE WORD OF THE CROSS

Golden Text

Far be it from me to glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Galatians 6.14

LESSON 1 Corinthians 1.1-2.5: 1 Corinthians 1.18-2.2 printed
MEMORIZE verses 1.22-24

1 18 For the word of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us who are saved it is the power of God. 19 For it is written,

I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,
And the discernment of the discerning will I bring to nought.

20 Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? 21 For seeing that in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom knew not God, it was God's good pleasure through the foolishness of the preaching to save them that believe. 22 Seeing that Jews ask for signs, and Greeks seek after wisdom: 23 but we preach Christ crucified, unto Jews a stumbling-block, and unto Gentiles foolishness; 24 but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. 25 Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

26 For behold your calling, brethren, that not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called:* 27 but God chose the foolish things of the world, that he might put to shame them that are wise; and God chose the weak things of the world, that he might put to shame the things that are strong; 28 and the base things of the world, and the things that are despised, did God choose, *yea* and the things that are not, that he might bring to nought the things that are: 29 that no flesh should glory before God. 30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who was made unto us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption: 31 that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

2 1 And I, brethren, when I came unto you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. 2 For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

I. God's Method of Salvation. 1.18-25.
II. The Character of the Corinthian Converts. 1.26-31.
III. The Character of Paul's Preaching to the Corinthians. 11.1-5.

1.18. *The word of the cross.* The word, or doctrine, of the cross means the teaching that salvation comes to men through the crucifixion of Jesus Christ as a sacrifice for their sins.—*To them that perish...unto us who are saved. To them that are perishing, unto us who are being saved,* RVm.—*Is to them foolishness ...unto us it is the power of God.* Paul here states the opposite effects that this doctrine, or preaching, produces.—*Foolishness...the power of God.* To the one a savor from death unto death; to the other a savor from life unto life, 2 Cor. 2.16.

19. *For it is written.* In Isa. 29.14; the words are quoted from the Septuagint Version.—*The wisdom of the wise and the discernment of the discerning.* These two phrases are parallel expressions meaning the same thing. Isaiah is speaking of the failure of Judah's statesmen to grasp the fact of the judgment in the Assyrian invasion, and prophesies that all their wisdom will not avail them. Paul applies that prophecy to his thought.

20. This verse is considered a free citation of Isa. 33.18, adapted by Paul for his present purpose.—*The wise.* The "wise man", the Greek philosopher, with

his subtle word-play.—*The scribe.* The "wise men" among the Jews, interpreters of the law.—*The disputers of this world.* Whether Greek or Jew. The Greek word means *inquirer* also.

21. *In the wisdom of God.* It was in the fulfilment of God's wise purpose that the failure occurred, "for the sense of failure prepared men to welcome the gospel."—*The world through its wisdom.* The world relying on its own wisdom alone had not attained to a knowledge of the saving power of God. The pagan world was wise for its generation, but it had failed to find out God, for world-wisdom—or, to use the familiar word *zeitgeist,* the spirit of the times—knows not God or the things of God.—*It was God's good pleasure.* When the failure was manifest.—*Through the foolishness of the preaching.* Through the gospel or good news that seemed to the Greeks foolishnesss. Paul is here speaking from the Greek point of view. "Yes," says one, "you call it folly; but it is wiser than all your wisdom!"

22. *The Jews ask for signs.* They wanted an exhibition of power; compare Mt. 12.38; 16.4.—The Greeks seek after wisdom. They prided themselves upon their own learning, and they required proof which they could understand.

23. *But we preach Christ crucified.* "'We preach Christ crucified,' says Paul, and we are not going to be diverted by the hunger for mere sensation (requiring signs); 'we preach Christ crucified,' and we are not going to be disengaged from our high calling, and tempted to submit our Gospel as a piece of subtle and mincing controversy (seeking wisdom); we preach it boldly, definitely—'Christ and him crucified'" (*Jowett*).—*Christ.* Or, *the Messiah,* RVm.—*Unto Jews a stumbling-block.* The Jews expected a Messiah who would be a great king in Jerusalem, and they scorned a Messiah who had been put to death on a shameful cross.—*Unto Gentiles foolishness.* Many of them made sport of such a Messiah.

24. *Unto them that are called.* Greek, *the called themselves,* RVm. Unto those who accept the crucified Jesus as their Messiah.—*Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.* The Jews asked an exhibition of power: Christ is the power of God. The Greeks sought after wisdom: Christ is the wisdom of God. Christ proves his Divine power by his forgiveness of sin, and Divine wisdom by his revelation of the will of God.

25. *The foolishness of God.* The weakness of God. "O Paul, if I had said that!" exclaims Origen, who knew what it meant to suffer for the use of extravagant expressions. Paul is speaking from the human standpoint; to the wisest of men God's method for man's salvation would have appeared foolishness before its power had been made evident. "The lowest manifestation of Divine wisdom exceeds the highest results of the wisdom of men; and the lowest exercise of God's power is more effectual than all human strength" (*Hodge*).

26. *Behold.* Or, *ye behold,* RVm.—*Your calling.* The call of God that comes to you through Christ.—*Not many wise after the flesh.* Wise with human wisdom.—*Not many mighty.* Men of power and authority.—*Noble.* Well born. The Corinthian Church was composed mainly of freedmen (who had once been slaves but had been set free or redeemed) and slaves; there were few who were rich or powerful from the worldly standpoint. "In verses 26-28, ringing like a song of defiance and inspired by the defensive pride which longs for the fray and rejoices in the strength of poverty despised, Paul has sufficiently well characterized the social structure of the church of Corinth" (*Deissmann*).

27. *God chose the foolish things of the world.* Note how the neuter is used, although referring to persons, because of their indefiniteness. The foolish things of the world are the foolish part of mankind: the weak things of the world are the weak part of mankind. Recall how, when John the Baptist sent messengers to Jesus to ask him whether or not he was the Messiah, Jesus pointed to the evidence, which had been rejected by the many, and said, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes".—*That he might put to shame them that are wise.* "By exalting over them those whom they despised."

28. *The base things.* Those not of noble birth, the lowly.—*The things that are despised.* The persons who are looked down upon by the higher ranks of

society.—*Yea and.* Many ancient authorities omit *and,* RVm.—*The things that are not.* Those that are deemed of no account, the nonentities. "There is a climax here. God has chosen not only plebians, but of the plebians those who were objects of contempt, and even those below contempt, too insignificant to be noticed at all" (*Hodge*).—*That he might bring to nought the things that are.* God brings to nought those who are, those who count themselves something.

29. *That no flesh should glory before God.* This is the reason given for God's calling the ignorant rather than the wise, the lowly rather than the mighty, the insignificant rather than the important, that no one should boast that to his own wisdom or power or rank he owed his salvation. See verse 31.

30. *Of him.* Of God.—*Are ye.* "The word *ye* is emphatic—ye, with all your disadvantages in this world. It is simply by God's action that you are in Christ Jesus" (*Goudge*).—*In Christ Jesus.* God is the cause for your being in Christ Jesus, that is, being in unison with Jesus as your Redeemer, being true Christians.—*Who was made unto us wisdom from God.* No man knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son shall reveal him, Jn. 1.18.—*And righteousness and sanctification and redemption.* "When we stand before the judgment-seat of God, Christ is our righteousness. He answers for us; he presents his own infinite merit as the all-sufficient reason for our justification. He is also our sanctification. His Spirit dwells in all his people as the Spirit of holiness, so that they are transformed into his likeness from glory to glory. When redemption is distinguished from justification and sanctification, it refers to the final deliverance from evil" (*Hodge*).

31. *That.* In order that.—*According as it is written.* Jer. 9.23, 24.

2.1. *And I.* I therefore.—*When I came unto you.* He refers to his first visit at Corinth, our last lesson.—*Not with excellency of speech or of wisdom.* He had made use of oratory and philosophy before the Athenians to no avail.—*The testimony of God.* The message given him by God. "In verses 1-5 Paul expresses with the sure hand of a master of thought and an artist of the highest order in the use of words, his purpose, his subject, and his choice of a style, viz, the style which the subject imperatively demanded. 'It was not I that spoke, but the Spirit spoke through me:' such might almost be given as a fair statement of Paul's meaning" (*Ramsay*).

2.2 The Bishop of Madras, after telling us how efforts to reach the hearts of educated Hindus by philosophic presentations of Christianity have entirely failed—they have been interested, but no more—continues: "After an experience of twenty-six years in India, my own conviction is now far deeper than it was when I first landed that what the people of India need is the Gospel of salvation from sin, and that the highest wisdom of the missionary is as far as possible to avoid philosophic discussions like St. Paul at Corinth, and to be determined to know nothing among men but Jesus Christ and him crucified".

The Lesson Paraphrase. The doctrine of salvation through the crucifixion of Jesus Christ as a sacrifice for the sins of men is of no avail to those certain to perish (because they do not accept it); but to us who are certain to be saved (because we believe, Rom. 1.16), it is the power of God.

For it is written,

I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,
And the discernment of the discerning will I bring to nought.

Where is the wise man—the Jewish scribe, or the Greek philosopher? Let him answer, Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? He has, for since the world, surrounded by proofs of God's wisdom, through its wisdom could not secure saving knowledge of God, it was God's good pleasure through the preaching of the cross (which seems "sheer folly" to some), to save those that believe. The Jews ask for signs, exhibitions of power, and the Greeks require wisdom such as they can understand, but we preach the doctrine of Christ the Crucified (which is a stumbling-block to the Jews, for they asked for a great, earthly prince, not a Messiah who was put to death on the cross), and a doctrine that appears foolish to the Gentiles; but to them that have accepted the call of God, both Jews and Greeks, it is the power of God and the wisdom of God. For the smallest bit of God's wisdom is wiser than the highest wisdom of men, and the least exercise of God's power is stronger than the greatest power of men.

You see, brethren, that in your own ranks it is not the wise nor the influential, nor those of noble birth who are led to God and his salvation. But God chooses those who are ignorant that he may put the wise to shame, and the weak ones that he may put the strong to shame, and the lowly, the despised, yes, even those accounted too insignificant for notice, that he may put to shame those that have made themselves known, by proving to all these of how little value are the things on which they pride themselves. And his design in calling these men was that no one should boast that his salvation was due to his own merit or circumstances.

Your saving union with Christ is not due to yourselves, it is not because you are wise or influential or of high rank, whereof you might boast, but it is due to God. And God made your wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption dependent on union with Christ, and that union dependent on his own good pleasure, in order that all the glory of your salvation should be ascribed to him. Therefore I came to you neither as a rhetorician nor as a philosopher, but simply bringing the message which God had given me. For my only object in going to you was to preach to you Christ, his Person and his Word, Christ who died on the cross for your sins.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

1.22. *Greeks seek after wisdom.* The Greeks were a wise nation. During all the centuries that have passed since Greece was a flourishing nation, their great men have been unsurpassed. The modern world has no thinker to compare with Socrates or Aristotle or Plato, no sculptor to compare with Phidias or Praxiteles; philosophy was the Greek's meat and drink and recreation; of oratory, poetry and art they were masters, but because they were learned in those fields, it did not follow that they were authorities in religion.

2.1 *I came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom.* All the great rhetoricians of Greece came to Athens to display their learning and eloquence, and to their speeches Paul's plainness of speech was a great contrast. Augustine compared Paul's writings with Cicero's elaborately written treatises, and complained that Paul's style seemed uncouth to him.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. How did Paul say the people of Athens spent their time? What did our lesson about Paul at Athens show was the Greeks' knowledge of religion? What arts of speech did Paul use in his address before the Athenians? How was Paul received at Corinth? What was the result of his preaching there? What captain from Damascus, as we learned in a lesson of last year, found that what seemed to him a foolish thing to do—to wash in the Jordan to be healed of leprosy—was "the power of God"?

Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians. The story of the founding of the church among the Corinthians, as given in the Acts, was our lesson last week. To-day we turn to the first letter which Paul afterwards wrote to that Church.

The Occasion for Paul's Counsel to the Corinthians. The first seventeen verses of our lesson are necessary in order to understand the verses printed, which are the climax to which Paul has been leading. Contentions had arisen in this Christian community after Paul's departure, and some had ranged themselves under Paul's name, some under that of Apollos, some under that of Cephas, some under that of Christ. After his words of greeting, Paul tells them that word has reached him of this lack of unity, of this reliance upon this or that leader instead of upon Christ, and asks: "Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" And then he thanks God that he had baptized but two men, "lest any man should say that ye were baptized into my name. For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel", and in preaching it to give all his thought to the truth of his message, rather than to the manner of his utterances.

It was this very plainness of speech, this absence of rhetorical and philosophical phrases, that led some of the Corinthians to esteem the eloquent Apollos as greater than Paul.

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A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Plato is unrivaled in his knowledge of his time, his power of expression, his elegance of language. But where dozens today know of Plato, millions know of Paul. Why is Paul an infinitely greater force in the world today than Plato? A word of Paul's in our lesson gives the answer: I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified. Paul was like a charged dynamo, full of power, the power of the knowledge of Christ, his life and his works, his death and his resurrection—of Christ the Crucified.

Earlier in our lesson (verse 17) Paul wrote: Christ sent me to preach the gospel: not in wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made void—of none effect. Are you, perchance, striving to teach in wisdom of words? Dr. J. R. Miller (in "Paul's Message for Today") imagines a man supplying a fountain of pure water upon a dusty highway, and so surrounding it with trees and flowers that it is wholly hidden from the eyes of those whom it was designed to refresh, and warns us that in our teaching those who listen are too often charmed by the beautiful flowers of rhetoric or poetry or science with which the cross is ornamented, and fail to see the cross itself. He recalls the very familiar story of the artist who had painted the Last Supper, and then called his friends to see it. He had tried to make the Master's face the central object of attraction, and was pained to hear his friends praise this and that subordinate feature in the picture, while they did not speak of the Face. Taking his brush he erased from the canvas the features that had won the beholders, that nothing might keep any eye from the Savior himself. Those of us who teach, he adds, need to learn this lesson well, lest in our desire to make our lesson attractive we hide the Redeemer and the cross which we desire all to see.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. This is a difficult selection for young pupils, therefore do not attempt to teach more than its general drift and meaning. Begin by recalling Paul's experiences at Corinth (our last lesson), then discuss what he wrote the Corinthians about the purpose he had in view in all his preaching to them, verses 1 and 2 of the second chapter. Having explained these words clearly, explain verses 22-24: the remainder of the text may be neglected. Teach the lesson of the First Topic.

For Older Pupils. Begin with the first seventeen verses of our lesson which are not printed, in which Paul thanks God for the knowledge of the truth possessed by the church at Corinth, and warns them against party strife—the knowledge of which had led him to write this letter. See the Historical Background.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I The Word of the Cross

Mr. Moody's Only Message. At the beginning of Mr. Moody's career he went to London to attend a meeting of ministers. They asked him about his creed. He said, "My creed is in print". "In what book?" "The fifty-third of Isaiah", Mr. Moody said quietly. "He was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was on him; and with his stripes we are healed. I have no other creed."

A Great Missionary's Experience with the Word of the Cross. I never got away from Jesus, and I found that when my people were gripped by this great evangelical doctrine of Christ, and him crucified, I had no need to give them instructions about morality. I found that one followed as sure and inevitable fruit of the other. ....I find my Indians begin to put on the garments of holiness, and their common life begins to be sanctified even in a trifle when they are possessed by the doctrine of Christ, and him crucified. *David Brainerd.*

The Power of the Cross. A very dear and intimate friend of mine only last week related to me a dream which had been blessed by God to the redemption of his own father. The father dreamed that he was a hare, and a hare he was. So real and so graphic was the consciousness of the dream, that he felt he could almost smell the dewy turnip-tops of the fields amongst which he

moved. Suddenly he heard the cry of the hounds. He pricked his ears, listened, and bolted full pace across the fields. The hounds drew nearer and nearer, and came at last so close to him that he could feel their hot breath. Then he found that he was leaving the green pastures and was reaching bare and rugged heights; and just when he had reached those bare and rocky heights he became conscious that his pursuers were not hounds. They were his sins, and he was a flying soul! Away up, away up, away up towards the summit he saw a cave, and terrified beyond measure he made for the cave and then turned round. The entrance to the cave was flooded with a most unearthly light, and just in the centre of the opening there shone resplendently a cross, standing between him and the awful things that pursued. He awoke, and behold, it was a dream. But by the power of the dream he was redeemed.

Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee.

Dr. J. H. Jowett, in *Apostolic Optimism.*

II The Message that Convinces

The Effect of Preaching Christ and Him Crucified. By the end of Marcus Aurelius's reign (A. D. 161-180), Christianity had been introduced into every province of the Roman Empire, had been carried to a large part of the Parthian Empire and the remote regions of the East, and beyond the Roman frontiers on the north to the then barbarous tribes of Europe. In the words of Justin Martyr: "There exists not a people, whether Greek or Barbarian, or any other race of men by whatever appellation or manner they may be distinguished, however ignorant of arts or agriculture, whether they dwell under tents or wander about under covered wagons, among whom prayer and thanksgiving are not offered up in the name of a crucified Jesus to the Father and Creator of all things".

The Magnet of the Cross. When the England of the eighteenth century—so superficial, so cruel, so soddened in immoral indifference—began to move toward a cleaner and a sweeter and more enlightened life, the magnet that drew her was the Lamb of God. The miner in Cornwall and Northumbria, the workman in the Potteries, the shepherd on the Northern moors, the poor cotter in Scotland and in Ireland, all felt the pull of the magnet and sped with eager feet toward their Lord. Let anyone turn to John Wesley's Journal, and read the inner story of that wonderful revival, and he will be in no doubt as to what was the quickening ministry that created it. From shepherd, and fisherman, and miner alike, this was the common cry: "O Lamb of God, I come!"

And it has not been otherwise in a nearer day. No one has ever moved the multitude except the men with the magnet of the uplifted Lord. Have you known of any Moody with similar passion and similar aim, but with another magnet than this of the crucified God, who has moved the masses of our countrymen and drawn them into the consecrated paths of higher life and service? If such there be, I should like to know of them, for as yet they have never passed across my sight. *Dr. J. H. Jowett,* in *Sunday School Chronicle.*

The Cross is the Place of Great Awakening for Sinners. And explain it as we may, or leave it unexplained, the experience of the Christian Church has gathered abundant witness to the truth of this statement. It is in the place where forgiveness is most supremely revealed that men have gained the most searching convictions of their sin. It has been always at the preaching of the Cross that men have been pricked—we have not a better word yet—that men have been pricked in their heart. Just look at the old apostolic word. They were, says the Acts of the Apostles, "pricked in their heart", pricked, goaded, irritated; first made irritable, and filled with unrest, until it touched the heart and became a pain and an agony. Nowhere else, nohow else, can you get the pain and the shame and the fear of sin which you find awakened at the Cross.

The Cross is not merely the birthplace of my fears, or the birthplace of my shames, or the birthplace of my disgusts; it is the birthplace of the radiant and immortal hope. I like old John Nelson's words when he was preaching about the influence of John Wesley's preaching and its effect upon him. When he had done, he said, "This man can tell the secrets of my heart, but he hath not

left me there, he hath showed me the remedy, even the blood of Christ. Then was my soul filled with consolation, through hope that God, for Christ's sake, would save me." But that has not been merely the experience of John Nelson: it has been the experience wherever Christ, and him crucified, has been proclaimed. Where has the sanctified comfort of the Christian Church been found? Not far away from the Cross! "And I saw in my dream that just as Christian came up to the Cross his burden loosed from off his shoulders and fell from his back, and began to tumble, and so continued to do until it came to the mouth of the sepulchre, where it fell in, and I saw it no more. Then was Christian glad and lightsome, and said with a moving heart, 'He has given me rest by his sorrow and life by his death'!"

The doctrine of Christ, and him crucified, is generative of moral and spiritual force. It is the doctrine above all others which is productive of the ethical energy required for the arduous living of our daily life. It is the power of God unto salvation. I think I can almost feel the thrill of the apostle's heart when he said it—The Gospel of God is "the power of God unto salvation", right up to it, not merely to regeneration, but to sanctification and perfect health. It is the power of God until God himself shall put his hand upon me and say, Saved! It is the dynamical power of God, enabling me to meet my daily foes, to front them in confidence, to overcome them, not faintingly, but to be more than a conqueror, to march over them as a man in Christ my God. *Condensed* from *Apostolic Optimism*, by *Dr. J. H. Jowett.*

III Rightful Glorying

No Flesh Should Glory before God. There is nothing Paul dreads more in the nature of man than his tendency to think too much of himself and to put himself in the place of God instead of giving God the glory, in other words, to make himself the centre of his universe instead of regarding God as at once the centre of his being and the goal of his development. The result of this is that he loses his perception of the nature of God and his love of God, whom he misrepresents more and more completely in his own imagination.

Modern experience confirms the judgment of Paul that great danger lies in over-estimation of oneself. It is well known that an exaggerated estimate of one's skill and power proves in many cases to be a sign of incipient insanity. In an asylum for lunatics there is no symptom so widespread as the preoccupation with one's self, one's powers, one's rights and one's wrongs. The patient lives in a world of his own, created by his individual fancy. In the thought and view of Paul to mistake one's true relation to the world involves a misapprehension of the nature and the purpose of God. If the mistake and misapprehension goes too far in a certain direction, it takes a form which we now label by the title insanity. I knew of one case in which a lunatic believed himself to be God, and wrote out his edicts in that character and with that signature; and an experienced physician told me that this same delusion was far from being unparalleled in asylums. *Sir W. M. Ramsay,* in *The Teaching of Paul in Terms of the Present Day.*

Why we may Glory in the Cross of Jesus Christ.

God forbid that I should glory
Or make boast of aught beside,
Save the wondrous heavenly story:
Christ for me was crucified. *D. W. Whittle.*

The cross speaks silently but surely of God's great love for sinners. For this reason it has become the sign under which Christianity has won its way in a world of sin. This is not a theory of theology. It is a fact of history. Wherever the religion of Christ has advanced, its song of victory has been the burden of the ancient Latin hymn:

"Forward the royal banners fly,
The sacred Cross shines out on high,
Where man's Creator stooped to die
In human flesh, to draw man nigh."

The same burden is repeated in the latest music of the modern Church:

"Onward, Christian soldiers,
Marching as to war,
With the Cross of Jesus
Going on before." *Dr. Henry Van Dyke.*

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

Have we been convicted of our own weakness and ignorance, and have we found in Jesus Christ the Crucified the very power of God and the very wisdom of God?

Our Prayer. Our Father in heaven, we need thy help in order to let loyalty to our Lord as thy Son and our Saviour, the Son of God and the Lord of life, be the supreme motive of our being, that he may use us in his service as he can use only those who trust him wholly. Then shall we see proofs of his power and wisdom such as we have as yet never known. Far be it from us to glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The Word of the Cross. See the First and Second Topics.
2. The First Epistle to the Corinthians. See pp. 33-36 of our Introduction.
3. The foolishness of some preaching today.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. Read chapters 12, 13 and 14 of First Corinthians. 2. What led Paul to write this Hymn of Love? (*Guide,* p. 310.) 3. Read Henry Drummond's booklet about "Love, the Greatest Thing in the World". 4. How did Jesus teach that God estimates almsgiving, not by the amount, but by the motive? 5. What sort of mirrors did they have in ancient times? (Ex. 38.8.) 6. What did Jesus call the two great commandments? (Mk. 12.28-33.) 7. What did Jesus say expressed God's love for the world? (Jn. 3.16.) 8. What are the most beautiful words about love in the First Epistle of John? 9. Look up 1 Jn. 4.7, 16, 20. 10. What is the greatest example of love? (Jn. 15. 13.)

Questions to Think About. 1. Why does Paul say "If *I* speak, etc.," rather than "If *you* speak"? (*Guide,* p. 306.) 2. What is meant by "the tongues of men and of angels"? 3. What does the last clause of verse 1 mean? 4. What is meant by "all mysteries and all knowledge"? (*Guide,* p. 307.) 5. What is meant by "faith so as to remove mountains"? (*Guide,* p. 307.) 6. Can there be charity without love? 7. If you give a few cents to a beggar in order to get rid of him, does this "profit" you anything? 8. Is an act of charity done as a matter of formal duty, profitable to the recipient? Is it "profitable" to the doer? 9. What people in Christ's day were very zealous in giving to the poor, but lacked love? 10. Is any form of martyrdom, any self-sacrifice, that does no one any good, profitable? 11. What adjective can you use in the place of each clause in verses 4 and 5? 12. Verses 4-7 have been called "St. Paul's picture of the Life of Christ": mention instances in Christ's life which each statement recalls. 13. What is the meaning of "vaunteth not itself"? 14. What is the meaning of the first clause of verse 5? The last clause? 15. Explain the figure of speech in verse 12. 16. Who said, "A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another"? Where is it found?

Memory and Note-Book Work. Commit to memory the Thirteenth Chapter of First Corinthians. In your Note-Book about "Lessons from Paul's Words", write what he wrote to the Corinthians about "The Word of the Cross".

Questions upon the First Epistle to the Corinthians. (See pp. 33-36 of our Introduction.) 1. Recall what you learned last quarter about Paul's work in Corinth, the reason for his writing this letter, its character and purpose, and its two great chapters. 2. Describe the thirteenth chapter as literature. 3. Why does it come upon one as a surprise in the letter? 4. What are the great lessons of the letter for today?

THE GREATEST THING IN THE WORLD—
(Temperance Lesson)

Golden Text

Now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love. 1 Corinthians 13.13

LESSON 1 Corinthians 13 MEMORIZE verses 4, 7

1 If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal. 2 And if I have *the gift of* prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. 3 And if I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor,* and if I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profiteth me nothing. 4 Love suffereth long, *and* is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, 5 does not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil; 6 rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth; 7 beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. 8 Love never faileth: but whether *there be* prophecies, they shall be done away; whether *there be* tongues, they shall cease; whether *there be* knowledge, it shall be done away. 9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; 10 but when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away. 11 When I was a child, I spake as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child: now that I am become a man, I have put away childish things. 12 For now we see in a mirror, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know fully even as also I was fully known. 13 But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

I. The Essentialness of Love, 1-3.
  1. Emotional Gifts Valueless without Love, 1.
  2. Intellectual Gifts Valueless without Love, 2.
  3. Practical Gifts Valueless without Love, 3.
II. The Characteristics of Love, 4-7.
  1. What Love Does, 4, 6, 7.
  2. What Love Does not Do, 4, 5, 6.
III. The Imperishableness of Love, 8-13.
  1. Gifts that Perish, 8-12.
  2. Graces that Abide, 13.

1. *If I speak.* It has been remarked that Paul illustrates in his very first words the lesson he wishes to teach: had not his instinctive courtesy been inspired by love, he would have written, "If *you* speak".—*With the tongues of men and of angels.* If I am eloquent. The Greek word γλώσσαις, translated "tongues", means primarily ecstatic utterances. "The gift of tongues was an emotional gift. It was an ecstasy of feeling by which men were carried away and broke into rapturous, inarticulate utterances. The sublime realities of the Christian faith—God, Christ, the forgiveness of sins, the assurance of immortality—as they broke into the common life of man, disturbed its equilibrium profoundly. Nature rocked under the impact of the supernatural as a boat rocks on the water when a heavy weight is suddenly thrown into it. This emotional disturbance, though in some ways incalculable, seems always to have had one character. It was an ecstasy of praise. A modern musician has written songs without words: this is a very apt description of the peculiar kind of spiritual emotion called in the New Testament 'speaking with tongues'. Probably the nearest approach to it most Christians make is when they are carried away

by the feeling of a revival meeting. In Mr. Moody's revival meetings the church was full of men who floated, so to speak, on a wave of emotion; an unutterable joy in the redeeming love of God seemed to sustain their life; it was full, as they would have said in the early days, of people speaking with tongues. This is an experience which many make light of and even deprecate; they do not speak with tongues, and they do not want to. But this is not how it is regarded by the Apostle, though he knew as well as any modern moralist that the promise of the new emotion is not always fulfilled. 'I thank my God', said he, 'that I speak with tongues more than you all'; I am more open than any of you to this access of feeling which rises to unintelligible rapture. But good as this emotional susceptibility is, gift of God as it is, it is not good if it terminates in itself" (*James Denney, condensed* from *Expository Times*).—*And of angels.* The language of angels: the gift of tongues to its highest conceivable limit.—*But have not love.* But do not speak in the spirit of love. Throughout this Revised Version *love* is more correctly used where the Authorized Version has *charity.* Our word *charity* comes from the Latin word *carus,* meaning primarily *dear, costly. Love* was used to express the feeling arising from the sight of need. It was a good translation for ἀγάπη when the Authorized Version was made, but it is now used only to express liberality toward the poor, or liberalness in judging others. This Greek word is nearly always translated elsewhere in the New Testament by *love.*—*I am become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal.* My words mean no more than so much noise. By "sounding brass" is meant a trumpet or instrument made of brass. Trumpets and cymbals were used to produce deafening noises in the worship of pagan temples. "The illustration was probably adopted from the shrill, discordant noise made by the speakers with their tongues, each endeavoring to drown the voice of all the others, as seems from what follows to have been the case with the Corinthians. Paul says, 14, 23, the meetings for worship in Corinth, if all spoke with tongues, would be so confused as to make strangers think they were mad" (*Charles Hodge*). "It is not the steam which is blown off with a loud noise, and invisible for a moment in dense, white clouds, which drives the engine; it is the steam in the boiler, which is subject to intense pressure, and is neither heard nor seen. 'The manifestation of the Spirit is given to everyone to profit withal', and the question on which everything turns is: What service is being done, by these prized exaltations of mine, to the Church which is the body of Christ? For what ministries of love do they frunish the driving power?" (*James Denney*).

2. *And.* Paul now proceeds from the emotional spiritual gift (of tongues) to intellectual spiritual gifts (prophecy, mysteries, knowledge, faith).—*All faith.* Note the force of the repeated *all,* all mysteries, all knowledge, all faith.—*So as to remove mountains.* This was a proverbial expression for "to accomplish great things"; see Mt. 17.20; 21.21. "Faith is here not used in the general sense of that trust in Jesus which makes a man a Christian; it is a specific spiritual gift operating not on the emotional, nor on the intellectual, but on the practical side of human nature."—*I am nothing.* Note the contrast between what a man has and what he is: he may *have* extraordinary gifts, but he *is* nothing.

3. *If I bestow all my goods to feed the poor.* The Jews were most ostentatious in their alms-giving; see Mt. 6.2. Recall Ananias's desire for approbation in his charity.—*If I give my body to be burned.* If I make great self-sacrifice. Even martyrdom, the supreme case of self-sacrifice, if not inspired by love for Christ and his cause, has no value in God's sight.—*It profiteth me nothing.* Others may benefit from loveless gifts, but not the giver himself.

4. *Love.* "A great theologian has defined Christian love as the identification of ourselves with God's interest in others. To do this, to seek that God's will for them may be fulfilled, that that which is dear to him in them may be saved, to put what we are and have unselfishly at their service for this end: this is love. We do not know what love is till we see it in Jesus, and when we see it there we see him identifying himself with God's interest in us. We love, because he first loved us. 'Let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love.'"—*Love suffereth long and is kind.* Compare Prov. 10.12; 17.9.—*Love envieth not.* There was jealousy and strife among

the Corinthians, 1 Cor. 3.3.—*Love vaunteth not itself. Vaunteth* means *boasteth.* Recall Tennyson's words:

Love took up the harp of Life, and smote on all the chords with might;
Smote the chord of Self, that, trembling, passed in music out of sight.

—*Is not puffed up.* Conceited, inflated, as we say, with a sense of one's superiority. Contrast the situation among Paul's readers, as shown in 1 Cor. 4.6-8; 5.2; 8.1.

5. *Unseemly.* Rudely, discourteously. "Courtesy is love in little things".—*Seeketh not its own.* Its own advantage. See 1 Cor. 10.24, 33.—*Taketh not account of evil.* Does not write upon a mental ledger the insults and injuries it receives. "Love taketh not account of evil—much less repeats it" (*Van Dyke*).

6. *Rejoiceth not in unrighteousness.* There are self-righteous people, like the Pharisee who thanked God that he was not like the publican, who take pleasure in considering the faults of others. This is the eighth negative statement: how much a life of love consists in not doing things!—*Rejoiceth with the truth.* Rejoices to see truth and right prevail.

7. *Beareth all things....endureth all things.* Bears with the ingratitude or ill-treatment of the one loved; endures hardship for his sake. The Greek word ὑπομένει, translated *endureth,* means primarily to hold fast like a water-tight vessel, to let nothing escape: love does not let others know what it has to endure.—*Believeth all things; hopeth all things.* Believes in the one loved, and when such faith is no longer possible, hopes. Ramsay, calling attention to the rich vocabulary Paul employs and his great carefulness in regard to delicate shades of significance in this series of words of verses 4-7, observes that only a person who is accustomed to think much and to philosophize can practice such refinement in language. Let us not fail to note in this description of love what another has well called "St. Paul's picture of Christ".

8. Paul now returns to the comparison of love with the special gifts of tongues, prophecies, knowledge, and affirms that the latter are temporary gifts, but love is eternal.—*Love never faileth.* The Greek literally reads, Love faileth —no, never. The natural desire of one's heart is for that which will survive as long as personality abides, through all eternity, and this, Paul assures us, we have in love.—*Knowledge, it shall be done away.* "The argument of verses 8-13 involves the important truth that the continuity of human character is not broken either by death or judgment, any more than it is now broken by change of circumstances. Knowledge refers, not to the abstract principle, which will never pass away, but to the superiority of knowledge possessed now by an individual" (*Beet*).

9. *For we know in part.* We know but partially. A universal truth, but referring here to the special gifts of knowledge and prophecy. "The passage is important as showing a consciousness of the imperfection even of revealed knowledge" (*Stanley*).

10. *That which is in part shall be done away.* The visible is a ladder up to the invisible, the temporal is but the scaffolding of the eternal. And when the last immaterial souls have climbed through this material to God, the scaffolding shall be taken down, and the earth dissolved with fervent heat—not because it was base, but because its work was done" (*Drummond*).

11. A concrete illustration of verses 9-10.

12. *Now we see in a mirror, darkly.* In the best of modern mirrors we see only a reflection, not the reality; in ancient mirrors, which were of metal, even the reflection was very imperfect. Harnack says Paul is thinking also of the mirroring of God in nature and in history.—*But then face to face.* Compare Num. 12.8: with him (Moses) I will speak mouth to mouth, even manifestly, not in dark speeches.—*Then shall I know fully even as also I was fully known.* "According to the Apostle, the best thing in this temporal state, is love; but the absolute best, for which the soul longs, is perfect knowledge, knowledge 'face to face', knowledge in which 'I shall know'" (*Harnack*).—*Even as also I was fully known.* By God; 1 Cor. 8.3.

13. *Now abideth.* These three are eternal: faith in God will be ours throughout eternity; the eternal life is one of progress, and there will still be room for hope for future good; and love never faileth.—*The greatest of these is love.*

"Hope contemplates a possibility; faith converts the possibility into actuality; Love is the resulting disposition. Hope is a fountain; Faith draws the water and drinks; Love distributes the water to others" (*Jowett*). "We have but to substitute Jesus for love, the person for the thing personified, and Paul's panegyric becomes a simple and perfect description of the historic Jesus. As a literal portrayal of the character of Jesus it cannot be surpassed. Is it any wonder, therefore, that as a manifestation of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, Paul should assign the supreme place to love?" (*Harnack*).

The Lesson Paraphrase. It is as impossible to write a pleasing paraphrase of this wonderful Hymn of Love as it is of the beautiful Shepherd Psalm, but the following may prove a helpful interpretation.

Without love the most highly prized gifts possessed in the highest possible degree are worthless. Without love the gift of tongues, even that of angels, becomes as meaningless noise; the gift of inspired speech, the knowledge of revelation, the faith that could overcome all obstacles, becomes valueless; the giving of great possessions to the poor and the making of extraordinary sacrifices have no profit for the giver and maker.

Love manifests itself in its forbearance and kindness; love never envies others; love is not boastful nor proud, does not act with discourtesy, is not self-centered, is not provoked, does not look for evil in others and finds no pleasure in others' wrong-doing, but shares in the joy of Truth; it bears and believes and hopes and endures all things for others.

Love to God and man is permanent; prophecies, tongues, and revealed knowledge are transitory. Some of us now know and prophesy a few things, but when dawns the great Day such knowledge and prophecy will fade away in the great light of perfect understanding, just as the words and feelings and thoughts of childhood pass away when manhood is reached. Now we see as in the reflection of a dim mirror; then we shall see face to face and shall know fully even as we are fully known to God. Faith, hope, and love are the three things that abide forever; and the greatest of the three, the object of the other two, is love.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

1. *Tongues of angels.* It is probable that Peter speaks here after the manner of his countrymen, who imagined that there was an angelic language which was the key to many mysteries. *Adam Clarke.*

1. *Brass.* Bronze, a word denoting always in the Bible copper, either pure or containing as usual a small proportion of other metal, generally tin. Copper was wrought in very early times, probably earlier than iron; and for hardness and fusibility was alloyed with tin. Brass, *i. e.,* an alloy of copper and zinc, has not, I believe been found among any metallic relics of the past. *J. Agar Beet.*

1. *Cymbal.* Two circular concave metallic plates struck together, producing a clanging "music".

2. *If I have all faith, so as to remove mountains.* Removing mountains, and rooting up of mountains, are phrases very generally used to signify the removing or conquering great difficulties. Many of the rabbis were termed "rooters up of mountains" because they were dexterous in removing difficulties, solving cases of conscience, etc. In this sense our Lord's words in Mt. 21.21 are to be understood. He that hath faith will get through any difficulty and perplexity; mountains shall become molehills or plains before him. The saying is a proverbial form of speech which no Jew could misunderstand. *Adam Clarke.*

Ancient Metal Mirror

3. *If I bestow all my goods to feed the poor.* Eastern religions have tended to make the act of almsgiving stand for the virtue of which it is but one form. Of the five articles of the Musselman creed, almsgiving is the only moral truth. In the Jewish religion, at the time of the Christian era, the word corresponding to "duty" or "righteousness" had been confined, in like manner, to outward acts of beneficence. *Dean Stanley.*

3. *If I give my body to be burned.* It has been suggested by Dr. Lightfoot that Paul may have seen at Athens this inscription on a tomb in memory of a fanatic from India who, in the time of Augustus, leaped on a funeral pyre to show what he would do for religion: "Zarmanochegas, the Indian from Bargose, according to the ancient customs of India, made himself immortal and lies here".

12. *We see in a mirror darkly.* Mirrors at this time were circular pieces of polished metal provided with a handle, and were poor reflectors.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. What church did Paul say in a letter possessed the three great Christian virtues of faith, hope and love? What two people gave their money for charity in order to gain credit with men? Was there any love for the poor in their hearts? What happened to them? What indication is there in our last lesson that the Corinthians were envious or jealous one of another? On what occasions had Paul's love "endured all things"? When had it "hoped all things"? What heroine of our last year's lessons sought not her own interests because of her love for another woman? What hero's love for another man was equally great?

Why Paul Wrote this Matchless Lyric. Last week's lesson told us that a report had come to Paul about the various parties that had arisen in the Corinthian Church, and that Paul in his letter showed the Corinthians the folly of considering themselves followers of Cephas or of Apollos or of Paul, and taught them a better way—they were followers of Christ the Crucified, who was the Power of God and the Wisdom of God. Today we see that Paul learned also that they were jealous one of another at Corinth. Many of them aspired to be conspicuous figures in the Church. They had different gifts: some could preach, others could prophesy, yet others could teach, still others could heal. Sharp words, bitter arguments, wasted energy was the result. The Corinthians wrote Paul asking him to decide certain vexing questions. The question concerning "spiritual gifts" Paul answers in chapters 12-14. In chapter 12 he argues that there are diverse gifts, but the Spirit is the same; in chapter 14, that the gift of prophecy is better than that of tongues; but in the midst of this background of controversy and discussion he suddenly stops. It is as if the pity of it all overwhelmed him. "See", he wrote, "Covet earnestly the best gifts", and always remember that there is "a more excellent way", and then he contrasted the spirit they were showing with a spirit guided by love, taught them what they would and would not do if love actuated all their actions, showed them how superior love is to all else. Paul's words in this thirteenth of First Corinthians are among the most powerful, the best known and the best loved of all his words.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

The greatest of these is love. "Love is the open sesame to every childish heart", writes a Junior teacher in the "Westminster Teacher". "Not the sentimental love that leads us to call our boy pupils endearing names and thus earn their dislike forever, or that leads us to caress all the pretty little girls, but the love that brings us to Sunday-school in spite of bad weather, that leads us to become intimately acquainted with the home life of each pupil; that prompts the birthday letter or anything that will make close the bond between teacher and pupil, and that leads us to spend much time in prayer for each life committed to our keeping. Such love every pupil will feel."

And the greatest of these is love with pupils of larger growth. "I am surprised that the people in this great city flock so eagerly to my sermons: for my tongue is slow and heavy, my conceptions low, and my discourses flat, as you yourself are witness." Thus spoke St. Francis of Sales to the Bishop of Bellay during the latter's visit to Paris. "Do you imagine", the Bishop made answer, "that eloquence is what they seek in your discourses? It is enough for them to see you in the pulpit. Your heart speaks to them by your countenance and by your eyes, were you only to say the 'Our Father' with them. The most common words in your mouth, burning with the fire of charity, pierce and melt all hearts. There is, I know not what, so extraordinary in what you say that every word is of weight, every word strikes deep into the heart. You have said everything

even when you seem to have said nothing. You are possessed of a kind of eloquence which is of Heaven: the power of this is astonishing."

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Queen Victoria, it is said, learned as a child 1 Corinthians 13, and after she became Queen she made it her practice to repeat this beautiful chapter every morning before commencing her day's work. I hope that you have all learned it.

For Older Pupils. I have in mind a picture which you have all seen. It is the picture of a dog sitting before a phonograph listening with all his might, his whole body alert and intent. There is no mistaking that voice which he hears—it is his master's voice. He picks it out from all others, coming though it does in so questionable a way. It is the one voice that spells home and love and heaven for that dumb beast. Mr. W. J. Farrow refers to this picture and says, "It has its counter-part among men. I do not think I ever knew a human heart that did not respond in some way to this wonderful song of Paul's in First Corinthians. He was at his best when he wrote it. God was very real to him, and the result of that hour's exaltation gushed forth in strains so noble that I must believe that they are the echoes of eternal truths. And when our souls rise at the call of this music, and despise all things mean and base, they are not rising to a siren voice that will lure them to disappointment and destruction, nor answering to an empty echo that will laugh at us amid the rocks and precipices; they are rising to their own; they are responding to a master's call, and their Master is the Lord God Omnipotent."

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Love the Greatest Thing in the World

The Supreme Good. Every one has asked himself the great question of antiquity as of the modern world: What is the *summum bonum*—the supreme good? You have life before you. Once only you can live it. What is the noblest object of desire, the supreme gift to covet? Without a moment's hesitation Paul's decision falls, "The greatest of these is Love". Peter says, "Above all things have fervent love among yourselves". Above *all* things. And John goes farther, for he says that "God is love".

In these verses Paul gives us an amazing analysis of this supreme thing. As you have seen a man of science take a beam of light and pass it through a crystal prism, as you have seen it come out on the other side of the prism broken up into its component colors—red, and blue, and yellow, and violet, and orange, and all the colors of the rainbow—so Paul passes this thing, Love, through the magnificent prism of his inspired intellect, and it comes out on the other side broken up into its elements. And in these few words we have what one might call the spectrum of Love, the analysis of Love. Notice that they have common names; that they are virtues which we hear about every day; that they are things which can be practiced by every man in any place in life. Patience, kindness, generosity, humility, courtesy, unselfishness, good temper, guilelessness, sincerity—these make up the supreme gift, the stature of the perfect man.

We hear much of love to God; Christ spoke much of love to man. Religion is not a strange or added thing, but the inspiration of the secular life. Is life not full of opportunities for learning love? Life is not a holiday, but an education. And the one eternal lesson for us all is *how better we can love.* What makes a man a good linguist, a good stenographer? Practice. What makes a man a good man? Practice. Love is not a thing of enthusiastic emotion. It is a rich, strong, manly, vigorous expression of the whole round Christian character—the Christlike nature in its fullest development, and the constituents of this great character are only to be built up by ceaseless practice. Condensed from *The Greatest Thing in the World,* by *Henry Drummond.*

God is Love. India showed me the lovelessness of men when they have not heard or have not believed that God is Love. Religion there is fear, not love; worship there is an attempt to propitiate the baleful and destructive forces in the midst of which we have to live; love has no part in it. In Mohammedanism, which has taken a fifth of India under its leadership and inspired them with

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its ideal, there is only submission to the Supreme Authority, but no love. Heathenism only conceives God as a perpetual conflict of contending wills. Islam is a step farther; it thinks of him as One Will, but still it is only will that it conceives as God. Philosophy thinks of God as thought, as truth, as causation; according to philosophy the intellect is supreme, reason is sovereign, and all else is subordinate. Do we grasp the greatness of the disclosure made to men which identified God, not with will, not with thought, but with love?

Let us pause and define what love is. It is that feeling with regard to a person which, arising from recognition of attractive qualities, from instincts of natural relationship or from sympathy, manifests itself in solicitude for the welfare of the person or persons, in delight in their presence and in desire for their approval. Now we may hope to understand that sublime truth which is rightly taken to be the summit of religion, the supreme revelation of Christianity by the Cross of Christ, the truth that God is Love. Love is a feeling which arises from a recognition of attractive qualities—God's qualities, what God is; from instincts of natural relationship—God is our Father, we are his children; or from sympathy—sympathy with his will and his divine purpose, manifesting itself in solicitude for the welfare of God, for his honor, his glory, the satisfaction of his loving heart; in delight in his presence and in desire for his approval. It is wonderful that God feels like that to you; that you can take that definition of love and say, God loves me! Wonderful! And yet I know it is true; I learnt it from the cross; I learnt it when the Son of God poured out his life for the love of the world. It is wonderful that God loves you like that, according to that definition. He finds attractive qualities in you. He finds an instinct of relationship to you; he finds sympathy with you in your cares and sorrows as well as in your nobler parts. It is wonderful he loves you, loves you! And truly, "I love him because he first loved me". *Adapted* from a *Sermon* by *Dr. Robert F. Horton.*

Love Abideth for Ever.

O merchant at heaven's mart for heavenly ware!
Love is the only coin that passes there. *Archbishop Trench.*

II Love Seeketh not Its Own

The Law of Love in National Affairs. When the war is viewed in the light of God's intention for the world, it appears as a hideous sin. Is it not necessary to realize that the spirit of materialism and selfishness have entwined themselves round the roots of western civilization? For more important than the immediate causes of the war are the conditions that make it possible. It is the product of a false and unchristian conception of the relations of men to one another. Of this conception the antagonisms of the western nations are only one expression. The same wrong attitude is seen in the racial prejudice and hatred which is one of the most sinister features of our time. It expresses itself in the industrial warfare and class alienation that disturb the life of all western nations. The whole commercial system of the West is based largely on the principle of securing advantages at the cost of some one else; and it is noteworthy that conflicting commercial interests have been one of the chief influences that have fostered national antagonisms. By this war the hopeless bankruptcy of any attempt to base society on a selfish disregard of the rights and needs of others has been revealed. Christian people in all nations are called upon to repent of the spirit and attitude of which the war is an unequivocal and startling expression. The Church must recognize its failure to permeate western society with its distinctive principles. It has done much: far more than it often receives credit for. But must not every Christian in his deepest being feel ashamed of a spectacle that is so glaring a contradiction of the will of Christ for men? The question is whether the Church has ever really set itself to apply the love of Christ to social and national relations. Has the world, West and East, ever had cause to know that the Church is above all else a body of people who, in consequence of the amazing experience that God is love, are resolved that so far as in them lies the relations of men with one another shall be regulated by the principles of love and brotherhood? In the failure of the Church to declare and practice that which belongs to its innermost essence we are all alike involved. In every feeling of contempt for other men, in every instinct of class superiority or hatred, in all dislike of the foreigner because he

is foreign, in all readiness to profit at the cost of another's loss, we have fostered the spirit which has brought forth in this war its inevitable fruit. *Condensed* from an article in the *International Review of Missions,* by *J. H. Oldham.*

Love Doth not Behave Unseemly. You remember the boy who had an apple and the boy who had not. The one pleaded for just a bite, but was gruffly refused. Then he begged for the core, but the other replied, "There ain't going to be no core". There was a core to that boy's heart, and we have no difficulty in finding a name for it—selfishness. We may be perfectly sure that, not only in the case of the apple, but in every case, big or little, the same spirit will rule, will dictate the speech and action. That is his disposition. It will be selfishness all through. He will probably succeed in life in the estimation of this world, but it will be a success based upon a galling, embittering selfishness.

You remember also the other story in which the big lad offered his little friend the first bite of the apple he had found, and when the child took but a tiny piece, he cried, almost indignantly, "Bite bigger, Billy", as though his generosity was hurt at being taken on such a low level. I have no hesitation in calling that lad a "gentleman". You forget the gutter, you forget the rough manner of his speech. You forget his rags, and say that in God's sight—and I suppose no one else counts—you say that in God's sight he was a "gentleman", because he had the spirit, the disposition, the soul of one.

"Now", says Paul, "let us get down to the springs of action". Why do you think in the way you do? Why do you speak in the way you do? Why do you act as you do? It is that unseen spirit within which dictates everything. If the fountain is sweet, the waters will be sweet. If the fountain is bitter, the waters will be bitter. And I would have the waters sweet. *W. J. Farrow.*

Love Endureth All Things. Mr. Campbell Brown has published the life of "A Chinese St. Francis", a certain Mao. This Mao was on one occasion preaching in the streets of a Chinese city when a man dashed a jar of filth over him. The bystanders protested, but Mao said simply: "Don't blame him; he does not understand". Then he took off his stained and dripping upper garments and went on telling how the love of Christ is for the unthankful and the ignorant, as well as for those better disposed, till the man picked up the soiled clothes to wash them, and his companion quietly remarked: "If I had been so handled I could not have stood it". "Love endureth all things, brother", was Mao's reply. *Record of Christian Work.*

This World Might be Full of Love.

If faith, and hope, and kindness passed, as coin 'twixt heart and heart,
How through the eyes' tear-blindness should the sudden soul upstart!
The dreary, dim, and desolate would mar a sunny bloom,
And love would spring from buried hate like flowers from winter's tomb.
This world is full of beauty, as other worlds above;
And, if we did our duty, it might be full of love. *Gerald Massey.*

Love and Temperance Work. In his Epistle to the Romans Paul condenses into one sentence the thoughts of our verses 4-7—Love worketh no ill to his neighbor. Our Lesson Committee has designated this as a "Temperance Lesson", and with this thought as a starting point an excellent temperance lesson can be taught. Turn to recent magazines and papers for the latest information about temperance legislation, efforts for restoring drunkards to manhood, relief work, preventive measures—all of which are inspired by man's love for his weak or fallen brother, his desire to take from his pathway all things that work his ill. Temperance illustrations are given in this book with the treatment of the Lessons for Feb. 8, June 11, and Nov. 12.

III Courageous Agnosticism

We Know in Part. It is true of our knowledge of the universe as a whole. Little by little, throughout the ages, the universe has disclosed itself to the mind of man as he has been able to appreciate it. The story of science and of philosophy is one of advance by means of incessant rearrangements of the ideas which, ever and again, have been accepted as final.

It is true of the life around us. The mystery of the universe is not diminished when we turn from the macracosm to the microcosm; the commonest object of garden or seashore holds as much mystery as the stars. What do we really

know of a seed, an egg, or even a stone? We can describe processes and unravel histories, but the complete solution of the mystery of the simplest thing baffles us.

It is true of ourselves. Ask the surgeon and the physician if, with all their science and skill, if with their almost miraculous instruments and their almost incredible achievements, they understand the mystery of disease and of health other than in part. It is with the mind as with the body. For thousands of years men have been engaged in the work of education. They have had to deal with human material which has baffled them at every point, and it is only now that educators are beginning to understand something of the nature of the mind of a child. In all these things our agnosticism exceeds our knowledge. We stand before the ocean of being without and within ourselves, and confess the mystery.

But we cannot stop here; we must carry our principle to the end. If a certain agnosticism is necessarily imposed upon us with regard to the universe, planetary life and our own humanity, what shall we say when we think of God and of Jesus Christ? They who speak with the greatest confidence of their religious experience and of known communion with God are the very first to humbly say, "We know only in part". How can our limited minds conceive of the mystery of the Divine Being "who fills heaven and earth"? Clouds and darkness are about him—darkness which is excess of light. And who has yet fully known Jesus Christ? If the greatest of the apostles could say, towards the close of his strenuous life, "I follow after....that I may know him", what can the lesser apostles in all ages say? The fact that our own generation has witnessed the most extraordinary output of literature relating to Jesus Christ and his work is one proof that Christ is so great that no one man, nor any one system, nor all systems together, can completely comprehend him.

Lastly, the fact that we know only in part demands that somewhere and at some time the whole shall be disclosed. The part calls for the whole; it is a prophecy of the whole. The perfect must exist. We cannot think otherwise. Neither the world without nor the world within is built upon a lie. The God who is partly known exists in perfect being; we who partly know him are destined to know him fully. Here we have his letters, as it were; there we shall have himself. Then, says St. Paul, "we shall see face to face". The perfect knowledge and the perfect vision await us. The rivulets will find their way to the ocean beyond, the moral atmosphere is purer, the moral vision will be clearer. There God shall be more fully known. Meanwhile let us hold on to this fact, that if we know in part we really know. We have light enough to walk by, to live by, to love by, to serve by. We have a real Christian experience, a real salvation, a real peace, a real strength. We have all that in this life we need. And our main business is not to lose ourselves in useless speculations concerning the infinite, but to follow the light that is already granted to us, and to confide in the Divine Guide, who offers himself as the companion of our journey. They who do this will know the truth of Christ's word, "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life". *Condensed* from a *Sermon* by *Frederick C. Spurr.*

Seeing through a Glass Darkly. There is a pathetic story which Mr. Benjamin Schiff has translated from the German. It is about a small boy who had lost his parents. He lived with a disagreeable old woman who compelled him to beg, and he found his only happiness in gazing at toys through the shop windows. A set of lead soldiers especially pleased him. He could never touch them, for the glass was always between him and them. One day an accident occurred and he was taken to the hospital. When he returned to consciousness, he found himself in a bright and cheerful room, and he saw children in other cots really playing and handling the toys. Soon he, too, was able to sit up, and, wonder of wonders, the nurse brought him a box of lead soldiers. He stretched his hand out very slowly and what great joy was his when he found there was no glass between! Will it not seem that way to us—when we shall no longer "see through a glass darkly"?

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

Professor Henry Drummond wrote about "Love, the Greatest Thing in the World", and no one has ever equalled him on this great theme. His friends

said he could write his wonderful treatise on love just because he illustrated it in his own life. "Some men take an occasional journey into the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians, but Henry Drummond was a man who lived there constantly", says his biographer. Can you live in its spirit? Can you let love control your life, so that you will grow more and more forbearing, kind, generous, humble, courteous, unselfish, good-tempered, guileless, sincere, capable of bearing, believing, hoping, and enduring all things? If you would have love control your life, you must put him who is Love in control of your life.

Our Prayer. Reverently we bow before thee, our Father, and humbly we confess to thee that we have been living on a low plane where we have cared too much for the things that perish—for knowledge and riches and pleasure—and too little for the great things that abide forever—for faith and hope and love. Teach us the more excellent way. Be thou our constant helper as we press onward and upward toward the ideal of the lovable life, as shown us in the life of thy Son our Lord. Increase our faith in thee; strengthen our hope of the time when we shall no longer see thee as in a dim, though burnished mirror, but face to face; deepen our love for thee and for thy children everywhere, and make us more worthy of life eternal.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians. See "The Greatest Thing in the World", by Professor Henry Drummond. (This book every member of the class should own and study.)
2. Endowment ("gifts") versus character (the fruit of love).

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. What was the reason for having the collection? (*Guide*, p. 319.) 2. What reason for the Corinthians giving to the poor of Jerusalem does Paul give in Rom. 15.27? 3. What reason does he give in 2 Cor. 8? 4. In 2 Cor. 9.6-15, in what spirit did Paul tell them to make their collection? 5. What counsel did he give them in 1 Cor. 16.2 in regard to systematic giving? 6. What did Aristides say about the liberality of the Christians in the the second century? (*Guide*, p. 319.) 7. By what parable did Jesus teach that giving to others is giving to God? (Mt. 25.31-46.) 8. In what words did Jesus say that kindness shown to those in need was shown to him? 9. Tell about a gift that pleased Jesus, which is recorded in Mk. 12.41-44. 10. Bring to class several texts that teach the duty or the joy of giving. 11. What collections are made for Jews in Palestine today, and how do they repay? (*Guide*, p. 319.)

Questions to Think About. 1. What is meant by "the ministry to the saints"? 2. What did Paul mean when he said "that our glory on your behalf may not be made void in this respect"? 3. What is the force of the parenthetical remark in verse 4? (*Guide*, p. 317.) 4. How could Paul fear that their giving might be "a matter of extortion"? 5. What did Paul see would result from the "ministry to the saints"? 6. Explain verse 13. (*Guide*, p. 318.) 7. Explain verse 14. (*Guide*, p. 318.) 8. What is God's "unspeakable gift"? 9. Is it right to stimulate giving through competition in giving? 10. What great collections for the poor were made in our country during the great war in Europe? 11. What kind of giving honors God? 12. In what benefactions are you personally interested?

Questions upon the Second Epistle to the Corinthians. (See pp. 36, 37 of our Introduction.) 1. What was the occasion for this letter? 2. What are the character and purpose of the letter? 3. What are its three chief thoughts? 4. Describe it as literature. 4. What are its lessons for today?

Memory and Note-Book Work. Memorize 2 Cor. 9.6-10, and Whittier's four stanzas entitled "The Love that Gives".

In your Note-Book about "Lessons from Paul's Words", write what Paul said about "The Greatest Thing in the World".

THE GRACE OF GIVING

Golden Text

In all things I gave you an example, that so laboring ye ought to help the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that he himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive. Acts 20.35

LESSON 2 Corinthians 9 MEMORIZE verses 10, 11

1 For as touching the ministering to the saints, it is superfluous for me to write to you: 2 for I know your readiness, of which I glory on your behalf to them of Macedonia, that Achaia hath been prepared for a year past; and your zeal hath stirred up very many of them. 3 But I have sent the brethren, that our glorying on your behalf may not be made void in this respect; that, even as I said, ye may be prepared: 4 lest by any means, if there come with me any of Macedonia and find you unprepared, we (that we say not, ye) should be put to shame in this confidence. 5 I thought it necessary therefore to entreat the brethren, that they would go before unto you, and make up beforehand your afore-promised bounty, that the same might be ready as a matter of bounty, and not of extortion.

6 But this *I say,* **He that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. 7.** *Let* **each man** *do* **according as he hath purposed in his heart: not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. 8 And God is able to make all grace abound unto you; that ye, having always all sufficiency in everything, may abound unto every good work: 9 as it is written,**

He hath scattered abroad, he hath given to the poor;
His righteousness abideth for ever.

10 And he that supplieth seed to the sower and bread for food, shall supply and multiply your seed for sowing, and increase the fruits of your righteousness: 11 ye being enriched in everything unto all liberality, which worketh through us thanksgiving to God. 12 For the ministration of this service not only filleth up the measure of the wants of the saints, but aboundeth also through many thanksgivings unto God; 13 seeing that through the proving *of you* **by this ministration they glorify God for the obedience of your confession unto the gospel of Christ, and for the liberality of** *your* **contribution unto them and unto all; 14 while they themselves also, with supplication on your behalf, long after you by reason of the exceeding grace of God in you. 15 Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift.**

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

I. The Gathering of the Collection, 1-5.
  1. Paul's Certainty of the Readiness of the Achaians, 1-2.
  2. Paul's Precautionary Measures, 3-5.
II. The Reward of Liberality is Means for Further Liberality, 6-11.
  1. The Harvest as the Sowing, 6.
  2. God Loveth a Cheerful Giver, 7.
  3. Blessings Given to be Shared, 8-11.
III. The Purpose of the Collection, 12-15.
  1. The Poor Relieved, 12.
  2. Eastern and Western Christians United through Sympathy and Gratitude, 13-14.
IV. The Motive for the Appeal: the Greatest Gift of All, 15.

1. *As touching the ministering to the saints.* The collection for the poor in Jerusalem, which Paul was gathering.—*It is superfluous for me to write to you.*

Paul had already written to them about it; see 1 Cor. 16:1-4. He had also sent them instructions through Titus, 2 Cor. 12.18. In 1 Cor. 16.1 Paul passes abruptly from the glorious theme of the resurrection to the matter of finance. Dr. Watkinson calls attention to the fact that Paul felt there was no anomaly in so doing, and draws the inference that it is a false objection that is made today that the collection should not follow the sermon because it spoils the spiritual tone of the service.

2. *That Achaia hath been prepared for a year past.* See 1.1: by Achaia Paul means "you" the Corinthians of Achaia. Paul must mean here by being prepared, not that the collection was taken and all ready to send, but that the minds of the Corinthians were prepared, they fully purposed giving.—*Your zeal.* Or, *emulation of you,* RVm.—*Very many.* Greek, *the more part,* RVm.

3. *I have sent the brethren.* Titus and two companions.—*That our glorying on your behalf.* To the Macedonians, verse 2.—*Void.* Vain, unconfirmed.

4. *If there come with me any of Macedonia.* Paul was usually accompanied by some one from the place he left to his next stopping place; he was about to leave Macedonia for Corinth, and certain ones would accompany him.—*We* (that we say not, *ye*) *should be put to shame.* If they were unprepared at his coming, he himself would be greatly mortified before the Macedonians, and he reminds them that they also would be disgraced.

5. *I thought it necessary therefore.*—To avoid any possibility of being thus mortified.—*That they would go before unto you.* Go before Paul and his attendant Macedonians did.—*Make up beforehand your afore-promised bounty.* "Some people who promise very promptly and very easily, find it hard to keep their promises when the time comes for doing so. In an enthusiastic meeting where everybody is subscribing to a good cause, Christians sometimes put their names down with a good deal of eagerness and earnestness, and then by and by when the time for payment comes respond grudgingly. This seems to have been Paul's fear in this case" (*J. R. Miller*).—*Might be ready as a matter of bounty, and not of extortion.* If the amount had to be raised after the coming of Paul and his delegates, it might appear to the latter to have been extorted from them; while if it were all collected and awaiting their coming, the latter would see that it was given of their own free will.

6. *He that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.* "This is very simple and applies to sowing natural seed. If a man looks covetously at his pile of wheat and says, 'I cannot bear to waste this golden grain by casting it into the ground,' and sows but a little of it, hoarding the remainder, we know what the result will be. He will have but a scant harvest when the time comes, while the grain he hoarded will perhaps be worm-eaten and destroyed. But on the other hand, if he scatters the precious grains broadcast over his field, though he seems to be robbing his garner, he will have a plentiful return in the harvest. Gifts and good deeds are seeds sown which will yield a harvest just as surely as the grains of wheat one may sow in his field. They will yield many different harvests. The blessing they carry to those who receive them is one harvest. Then the blessing that the mere act of giving brings back to the giver is another, for Jesus said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' Then there will be the harvest gathered in the other world, when Jesus shall reward even the giving of a cup of cold water in his name. It is true also that the harvest will be small or large, just as the seed has been sparingly or liberally scattered. He who keeps and hoards loses, while he who scatters and dispenses holds. An old epitaph reads, 'What I gave I have; what I kept I lost'" (*Dr. J. R. Miller*).

7. *According as he hath purposed in his heart.* As much as his heart consents to give.—*Grudgingly.* The Greek ἐκ λύπης means literally, out of sorrow, sorrowing, that is, for what must be given.—*Of necessity.* The necessity of circumstances, constrained by Paul's urging, perhaps.—*A cheerful giver.* The Greek word translated *cheerful,* hilaron, means *hilarious, joyous.*

8. *God is able to make all grace abound unto you.* The meaning of the Greek word χάριν, translated *grace,* depends on the context, for it may be a gift, or good, that is temporal or spiritual. Here it seems to mean temporal good, riches, which will enable you to give to all good causes.—*That ye may abound unto every good work.* Earthly blessings are given, not for oneself alone, but that

one may share them with others. Compare 2 Cor. 1.4. "It is a great blessing given by God to be in a position to do good to others" (*Cyprian*).

9. *As it is written.* In Ps. 112.9. The quotation is connected with the last clause of verse 8 thus: He who gives liberally to the poor, his righteousness abideth forever. "In this passage it is plain that *righteousness* means general excellence or virtue as manifested in *beneficence.* And when it is said that his beneficence shall continue for ever, the implication is that he shall always have wherewith to be beneficent. And this is here the main idea, he shall have abundance for every good work" (*Charles Hodge*).

10. *Your seed.* "Your seed means your resources, your wealth, that which you can scatter abroad in acts of beneficence, as a sower scatters seed" (*Hodge*). —*Shall supply and multiply your seed for sowing.* "Paul's desire was to produce the conviction in the minds of the Corinthians, which he himself so strongly felt, that no man is the poorer for being liberal. The ground of this conviction was twofold: the explicit promise of God, and his character and general mode of dealing with men."—*Increase the fruits of your righteousness.* As in the preceding verse, righteousness here means your means of doing good.

11. *Your being enriched.* The construction of the participle is irregular. The meaning is, God will so increase your means for giving that you shall be enriched.—*Which worketh through us thanksgiving to God.* Paul had aroused the Corinthians to liberality, hence it was "through him" that the result—thanksgiving to God—would be attained.

12. By your generosity you will not only be supplying the wants of the Christians at Jerusalem, but you will cause them to give thanks to God. Paul nowhere seems greatly wrought up over the condition of the poor at Jerusalem, he cites no instances, gives no facts: to help them is one object of the collection, but Paul is seemingly more interested in the second object which he sees the collection will accomplish, that it will convince the Judean Christians that the Western Christians were not intruders but in truth their brethren, sympathetic and generous.

13. The grammatical construction of this verse, like verse 11, is irregular. The meaning is, Because they see in your bounty your obedience to Christ, they give thanks to God for your liberality to them and to others. Compare 1 Jn. 4.20.—*The proving of you.* What was proved was that for which the poor brethren glorified God, namely, the obedience to their profession of Christianity, and the liberality to all, of the Western Christians.

14. *While they themselves also.* The Judean Christians, in their turn, would pray for the Western Christians, and would be affectionately drawn towards them.

15. *His unspeakable gift.* His gift whose value speech can not express. Many scholars hold this view, given by Allan Menzies: "The gift is just the collection viewed in this light, as a signal manifestation of the divine kindness, fraught with such far-reaching, happy consequences, inviting to such a vista of expectations. But the apostle is apt to be carried from an ordinary occurrence in the Church to what is ultimate and supreme in God's counsels; and it may be so here. Not many, he says, have done the work he is considering; it is a divine gift, and this gift suggests the great gift of God which guarantees all others (Rom. 8.32) and from which they all flow". To Dr. Charles Hodge's words that follow, most will gladly subscribe: "God's unspeakable gift is his Son. This, according to the analogy of Scripture, is that one great, supreme gift, which is here intended. This is the more natural, because it is Paul's wont, when speaking either of the feeble love, or trivial gifts of believers, one to another, to refer in contrast to the infinite love and unspeakable gift of God in Christ to us, 2 Cor. 8.9; Eph. 5.1. It is his habit also to introduce ejaculations of adoration or thanksgiving into the midst, or at the close of his teachings or exhortations, Rom. 1.29; 9.5; 1 Cor. 15.17; 1 Tim. 1.17. The passage therefore ought to stand, as we doubt not the vast majority of the readers of the Bible understand it, as an outburst of gratitude to God for the gift of his Son."

The Lesson Paraphrase. It is needless for me to write you in regard to contributing to the needs of the poor Christians at Jerusalem, for I well know your readiness in this matter. To the Macedonians I have boasted of your zeal, that I might stimulate them to a like generosity. To make sure, however, that your promised help is in readiness and given willingly before I come with cer-

tain of the Macedonians, that my confidence in you may not for any reason be put to shame before them, I have sent brethren to you in advance of our coming to collect your gifts.

And I tell you truly that you will be blessed according as you give: sparingly, if you give sparingly, bountifully if you give bountifully. It is your manner of giving, your cheerfulness in giving, that counts with God. And God is able to supply all your wants and increase your means for good works: as it is written,

He who gives to the poor shall always be blessed with abundance with which to give.

And he who supplies the sower with seed to sow and with bread for food, shall supply and multiply your resources and increase your means for liberality; and this shall result in thanksgiving to God. For this collection will not only relieve the poor at Jerusalem but it will glorify God through their gratitude and love for you, aroused by this proof of your Christian graces, and expressed in supplication to God on your behalf. Our gifts are trifling: it is God's gift to us of his Son Jesus Christ that is beyond the power of words to express.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

11. *All liberality.* This is the testimony Aristides bore to the charity of the Christian in the time of Hadrian (117-138): He who has, gives to him who has not without grudging; and when they see the stranger they bring him to their dwelling, and rejoice over him as a true brother; for they do not call brothers those who are after the flesh, but those who are in the Spirit and in God; but when one of their poor passes away from the world, and any of them sees him, then he provides for his burial according to his ability, and if they hear that any of their number is imprisoned or oppressed for the name of their Messiah, all of them provide for his needs, and if it is possible that he may be delivered, they deliver him. And if there is among them a man that is poor or needy, and they have not an abundance of necessaries, they fast two or three days that they may provide the needy with their necessary food.

14. *Supplication on your behalf.* As a rule, the Pharisee of today is well to do, made so by the tithes and gifts that are sent from Hebrews in strange lands to be distributed among the poor, a large portion of which remains in the pocket of the Rabbi and Pharisee. The Jews of the cities of Palestine are, as a rule, lazy, and unthrifty, being taught to be so from their infancy; for every man, woman and child, from the day of his birth to his death receives a certain sum per week from a fund known as the Halooka, sent from all the Jews in the different parts of the world for the maintenance of their brethren in the Holy Land, for which they expect the residents of Canaan to pray for them, when near the Holy Places, and to be their proxy at their fast on the day of atonement and at their rejoicings on the day of the Passover. *Gamahliel Wad-El-Ward.*

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. Who were the Corinthians? How many letters did Paul write to them? How many lessons have we had from his First Letter to them? Give the main theme of each one. From what letter of Paul's was our lesson about reaping and sowing taken? How did the Christians in Jerusalem care for their own poor? When the task became too great for the oversight of the apostles, what did they do? What sort of giving does Paul say in 1 Cor. 13 is valueless to the giver? How were the Israelites stimulated to giving for the rebuilding of the temple, as told in a lesson of last year?

The Reason for the Collection. In our eighth lesson of this year about the beginnings of the Christian church at Jerusalem, we read that there was none among them that lacked, for as many as were possessors of lands or houses, sold them and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto each, according as any one had need. Then "when the number of the disciples was multiplying" the work of caring for the poor took much of the apostles' time, and seven officers were appointed to see that no one lacked food.

When Paul and Barnabas went to Jerusalem and met the apostles for a con-

ference in regard to the basis on which Gentile converts should be received into the Church, the apostles impressed on Paul the churches' duty of caring for their poor; "they would that we should remember the poor; which very thing I was also zealous to do," Paul wrote the Galatians, 2.10.

The maintenance of its own poor had been the care of each particular church, but Paul would have the churches realize the principle of universal brotherhood, and he made a careful plan for a great collection from many distant churches for the relief of the poor at Jerusalem. To the Corinthians he wrote in his First Epistle (16.1-5): Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I gave order to the churches of Galatia, so also do ye. Upon the first day of the week let each one of you lay by him in store, as he may prosper, that no collection be made when I come. And when I arrive, whomsoever ye shall approve, them will I send with letters to carry your bounty unto Jerusalem: and if it be meet for me to go also, they shall go with me. But I will come unto you, when I shall have passed through Macedonia.

To the Corinthians Paul gave as a motive for liberal giving the example of Christ and their abundance compared with the want at Jerusalem (2 Cor. 8.14), to the Romans (15.26, 27) he wrote that the churches of Macedonia and Achaia in making their gifts to the Church at Jerusalem but paid a debt of gratitude due that church. His greatest motive in having the collection made, however, seems to have been to prove the fellowship of all believers, to unite Gentiles and Jews, between whom there was danger of jealousy and dissensions, through the giving of common sympathy and sharing of mutual help. Therefore the collection must be made publicly and impressively. "From Galatia, from Corinth, and from Rome there flowed the gracious river of brotherly sentiment which makes glad the city of God," writes Dr. J. H. Jowett. "In all this there was something quite unique. It was a novelty in the history of the world. It was a beneficence that overflowed conventional boundaries. In earlier days there had been beneficence that was patriotic; now there arose beneficence that was human. It was not a sympathy of Jew with Jew, or of Roman with Roman, or of Greek with Greek. The race-lines crossed. It was a sympathy of Roman with Jew, of Gentile with Jew, of man with man, and this, I say, was a stupendous novelty in the intercourse of men. 'Henceforth there was neither Jew nor Gentile.' The stern, hoary race-limits were quite submerged in the voluminous sentiment of philanthropy born of a common faith in the redeeming Christ of God."

More than a year's time was occupied in gathering the gifts. Each group of churches sent their money by delegates who met Paul at different points and accompanied him to Jerusalem. Today we have a passage from Paul's second letter to the Corinthians, in which he urges them to complete their part of this great collection.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Paul aroused the Macedonians by the promptitude of the Corinthians, and stimulated the Corinthians by the liberality of the Macedonians. He was following the precept given in Hebrews 10.24: Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works. There is a spur in competition, an urge in rightful rivalry, of which Sunday-school teachers should make use. Dr. Watkinson maintains that rivalry is a divine ordination, and that something like rivalry is the law of the highest universe, and sees a veritable duel of sublime service and song in the words about the seraphim—"And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory". Wisely and tactfully you may apply the principle of emulation, competition, rivalry, in order to provoke your pupils to love and good works.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. During the great war there were many, many collections made in our country of money and food and clothing which were forwarded to the suffering ones in Europe. Do you recall the sending of "The Christmas Ship" with gifts to the Belgian children? There is a picture before me of a huge skating rink at St. Gilles, near Brussels, Belgium, where the Christmas gifts were distributed. It is filled with children. At the end of the hall

there is a great banner on which is printed *Merci aux Americains,* Thanks to the Americans. I hope that you had a share in making these children happy. When Mr. John Wanamaker announced in the Philadelphia papers in November, 1914, that he had chartered the steamship Thelma to be sent with foodstuffs for the starving Belgians, it was filled in less than a week with freewill offerings. As the Thelma was about to leave the pier, Bishop Thomas J. Garland prayed: "Grant that the message which this ship bears from the City of Brotherly Love may be an inspiration to all the nations of the earth, and bring nearer the day when human brotherhood will no longer be a dream".

Our lesson today is about a very early appeal for a fund for charity, and Paul, who made the appeal, aimed to accomplish by this fund just what Bishop Garland prayed for. How was Paul's fund to be used?

For Older Pupils. How does our lesson text begin? "For as touching the ministry to the saints." Who were the saints? Why did they need ministering to? For turning from Judaism to Christianity, the Christian Jews at Jerusalem were excommunicated and denied a living, then they began to be in want. Dr. J. H. Jowett says we have no adequate conception of the intense hatred and repulsion with which the Jews of today regard those whom they consider renegade members of their race, and he instances a case in his experience while preaching at Newcastle. He baptized and received into his church a young Jew, "who had been wooed by the beauty of the Christ into the warmer light of the Christian faith". "At once the parental instinct seemed to be benumbed. His father and mother forsook him. He was turned adrift. He was regarded as a dog. He was denied his daily bread. These were precisely the conditions which prevailed in Jerusalem, the ban of excommunication almost annihilated the chances of earning one's bread, and inevitably drove the outlaw into poverty and want. But Christianity fostered humanity; faith evoked philanthropy; and from their fellow-believers in wider fields there flowed a steady stream of beneficence to alleviate their distress."

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I In Praise of Rivalry

Stimulating Giving. Early in his reign Joash began to have collections raised for the repair of the temple, but when he had been reigning twenty-three years no repairs had yet been made. The priests had gone from house to house and had collected what they could, but the people had not given willingly. The givers had no assurance that others were deeply interested in the work nor that it would ever be carried out. Possibly, too, they were not assured that any of the money would be used for the purpose. Then a new arrangement was made. The chest with the hole in it for contributions was placed where all could see it, and the people were encouraged to give by seeing others give. The impulse to give became a great popular movement; their zeal increased, and the success of the undertaking was assured.

When Paul made his great collection for the church at Jerusalem, he knew the value of united effort. He wrote to the Corinthians and told them how magnificently the churches of Macedonia had responded to the same appeal. "According to their power, I bear witness, yea and beyond their power, they gave of their own accord." And he told the Macedonians how the people of Corinth has been prepared with their collection for a year past, and thus stirred up many of the Macedonians.

Far More than we Know we are Influenced by What Other People Do. One generous giver in a church is apt to make many others generous. When we hear of good deeds which some other one has done, we feel stimulated to do like deeds. Generosity in a neighbor makes us ashamed of our niggardliness. This is one of the indirect results of benevolence. One church doing well in its missionary collections stirs up other churches to give largely. One liberal class in the Sunday-school makes all other classes desire to be liberal. In one place our Saviour exhorts us not to give to be seen of men, but in another place he says, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven". *Dr. J. R. Miller,* in *Paul's Message for Today.*

Righteous Rivalry. Your zeal hath stirred up very many. Here the principle

of emulation, competition, rivalry, is recognized and allowed a legitimate place in the highest sphere of life and action. That competition is a root principle of life is evident enough.

In his interesting book, "Rifle, Axe, and Saddlebags," Dr. Milburn gives a lively picture of the steamboats on the great American rivers in the early days, and thus graphically describes the power of the competitive element in human nature: "If another boat heave in sight, you find yourself becoming anxious that she shall not pass you. If she gain upon your craft, all your fears about the dangers of racing are laid aside; and with your fellow-passengers, male and female, you are urging the captain to do his best. You run first to the deck to incite the firemen, and then to the hurricane deck to note the speed. The interest deepens, the first shot is fired, the battle has opened, and men and even women are no longer cowards. Every sense is strained, and yet the mind and nerves are wonderfully calm. Side by side the boats go thundering along, and so completely has the thought of victory taken possession of you, that you would almost as soon be blown up as beaten".

This sense of rivalry obtains in every department. The moving factor in athletics, from the Grecian games down to the struggles of modern foot ball and regatta, is the passion to excel. In the interests of philanthropy, St. Paul avails himself of the passion that urges men to do their utmost lest they should be eclipsed.

Christ has taught us that the law of rivalry may be so divinely transmuted that the competitors will show, not who can do most brilliantly in skill and strength to the detriment of his neighbor, but who can perform the highest service and the most of it; not who can inflict the greatest humiliation on his rival, but who can best inspire him; not who can most effectually subjugate and destroy, but who can best save and bless. Competition, whose animating principle is love, not suspicion, wrath, or envy; rivalry with reverence, seeking to shine in beneficent deeds, not in vainglorious exhibitions of selfishness and pride, —these are the happy features of the antagonisms of the future. Who shall give the most, do and suffer the most, for the common advantage. *Condensed* from *Moral Paradoxes of St. Paul,* by *Dr. W. L. Watkinson.*

II Giving that Honors God

Let us not Give to God as we Pay the Income Tax. "The other day an engineering paper commended a Universal Grinding Machine. It went on to describe this tool as being calculated 'to do all cutter grinding, flat grinding, parallel and taper, outside and inside grinding'. This machine reminded us of a few persons we have known; indeed, we think we can remember men who could have given that machine points. How different to all this is the spirit of Christ! It does not calculate what it can get out of men, but what it can do for them. It does not give niggardly, but abounds. It is not reluctant, but free and cheerful. The Universal Grinding Machine becomes a loving brother, giving time, sympathy, prayer, influence, and money to those who need. Let us not give to God as we pay the income tax. As the fragrance rises from the flame, as the sweetness drips from the honey comb, as the ripe fruit drops from the tree, so freely must we offer."

The Credit Due. There is a story of a stingy Scotch laird who tossed a crown, thinking it a penny, into the plate at the church door. Seeing its precious face he asked to have it back. The doorkeeper, Jeems, refused, "Aweel, aweel," he grunted, "I'll get credit for it in heaven." "Na, na," said Jeems, "Ye'll get credit for the penny."

Giving Oneself. If I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, but have not love, it profiteth me nothing. There is such a thing as charity without love. There is a charity which seeks only the praise of men, and there is a charity whose motive is personal relief from the sight of misery. The rich man who of his superfluity cast much into the treasury as Jesus sat and watched is an example of the one; you yourself when you toss a nickel to a blind beggar on the street corner are an example of the other. There is no love in either transaction.

Our word philanthropist is derived from two Greek words—*φίλος*, loving, and *ἄνθρωπος*, man—and means one who loves mankind. "Thy heart must have been full of love for that poor girl," said the poet Whittier to the Superintendent of

the Massachusetts Women's Reformatory when he learned what she had endured from one of her charges and what she had done for the wayward woman. She was a true philanthropist. The city missionary, the college girl in the "Settlement", the workers in all the varied branches of philanthropic work, must be actuated by love for those for whom their labor or their work will meet with but poor success, or it shall profit them nothing.

We ought to give generously and cheerfully, but also thoughtfully and wisely. Giving rightly is not an easy task. It has been said that it requires more brains to give away ten thousand dollars without doing more harm than good than it does to make the ten thousand dollars in business. The Editor of "The Classmate" recalls this statement and instances the wise giving of a small club of business men. Formerly the club had been in the habit of dispensing charity at Christmas by sending out chickens and groceries to a few needy families. Now it selects ten poor boys, eight to ten years old, and invites them for a Christmas dinner at the Club. The boys on arrival are clad in new suits throughout and given a fine dinner. But this is merely the beginning. Each one is told that a guardian, with an assistant, has been appointed for him, and that these two men, members of the club, will befriend him as opportunity offers. These men keep in touch with the boy, stimulate him to his best efforts at school, and when he is ready to go into business, give him a chance to make good. The plan of the Club is to make this Christmas offering to ten boys annually in this intelligent way, never losing sight of any of them, but carrying the ten additional boys along from year to year until each one shall be well grown and well settled in his life pursuit.

Giving for Mission Work. There is no giving that more honors God than money given to make him known to those living in darkness. It is a debt we owe him. Andrew Fuller once asked an old friend for money for foreign missions, and the friend replied, "I will give five pounds, Andrew, seeing it is you". "I will take nothing, seeing it is I," Fuller gravely said as he handed back the money. "Andrew, you are right," then said his friend; "here are ten pounds, seeing it is for the Lord". "The church can never capture the world for Christ so long as our gifts rest upon spasmodic emotion rather than upon conscience."

Class Benevolences. There are calls from the mission fields which your class can answer through the Surplus Material Department of the World's Sunday-school Association. See p. 169. Refer also to the book noted on p. 90.

It is More Blessed to Give than to Receive. Wealth, bestowed on families, has ruined so many boys as to give rise to the adage, "Where the father began, the son leaves off". More than half our rich men's sons would be better off had they been born poor. What is this but a demonstration that family selfishness is a violation of the law of the universe? The same law holds in regard to ecclesiastical and national selfishness. Can you point to any church or nation on earth which has morally or financially impoverished itself by helping the weak peoples of the earth? On the contrary, whenever a nation or a church becomes wealthy or yields to self-indulgence, its sudden destruction or slow decline is one of the most impressive lessons of human history. "There is that scattereth, and increaseth yet more; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth only to want." Jesus states the law for nations and churches as well as for individuals in its positive form: "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, shall they give into your bosom. For with what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again." *Bishop J. W. Bashford,* in *God's Missionary Plan for the World.*

How Beppo Learned that Giving is More Blessed than Receiving. During the hot summer months there is a "Floating Hospital" which makes regular trips from Boston down the harbor with sick babies and their poor mothers, and nurses and doctors go with them to help. One morning Beppo, an eight-year-old Italian lad, who had on ragged clothes and a brimless hat and carried a violin, asked permission to go with the boat and play. "I playa and taka collection," he said, and they allowed him to go. After he had played awhile he passed around his hat, but no one gave him a penny. He was angry and went to the manager to tell him how stingy the people all were, and the manager explained to him that these were all very poor people who had no money to give, whom kind people were sending on this excursion so that the air might do the

poor sick babies good. Beppo looked at his own clothes without saying anything, but thinking that he, too, was poor. Then he went around the ship and looked at the babies and their mothers, and the angry look left him, he saw that they were really poorer than he, and that the babies and little children were feeble and sick. He sat down on a camp stool and played, and the children who could walk gathered round him. He played almost all that day, and when they returned he begged to be allowed to come next time, and play to the poor babies. The manager pinned the badge of the Floating Hospital on his ragged coat, and he went with every excursion that summer and played, nor would he take any money from the manager for his playing. He had found out that though he was poor he could do something for people who were poorer than he, and he was as happy as a king while playing to those babies.

III Thanks be to God for His Unspeakable Gift

The Greatest Gift of the Greatest Giver. The Apostle has been speaking to the Corinthians about gifts, when all at once his heart takes fire and he bursts into this thanksgiving. He glorifies God for the whole wonderful and inexpressibly blissful work of redemption. In the apostle's reckoning Christ is the crowning gift of God to the race, and ecstatically he praises God for the glorious boon. Far beyond the good and perfect gifts of the material world is the preciousness of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Have we received the unspeakable gift? Men do not readily believe in and accept the highest gifts. They are often strangely blind. Did they welcome Gutenburg? Did they strew flowers for Columbus? Did they forthwith crown George Stephenson? The world did not believe in these great givers; the gifts they brought were too grand. So, when the "Unspeakable Gift" was bestowed, men stood aloof in insensibility or scorn. Christ came to his own, but they received him not. And today thousands see no beauty in him that they should desire him. He brought truth, but they walk in darkness; he brought grace, but they cling to the guilt and slavery of sin; he brought white garments, but they remain unwashed and unsanctified. An author is grieved when he discovers in our library an uncut volume of his presented to us long before. Poor author! Yet thousands have never, figuratively speaking, cut the leaves of the New Testament and read the glorious story of infinite love. The message of God's redeeming mercy is disregarded by multitudes of nominal Christians; and the Author this time may well grieve that the gospel written in his blood is ignored as a vain thing. Every now and then we hear of a superb masterpiece being discovered in a house where for years it has been neglected and unknown. But in how many houses is that gospel which is the masterpiece of God ignored and despised!

Some of us have received the crowning gift of God; but we have not *fully* received it. That is a striking passage in Obadiah, "The house of Jacob shall *possess their possessions*". We have a great inheritance in Christ; but we do not possess our possessions. The infinite light, grace, and energy which are really ours are most imperfectly actualized in our experience. This poor experience is not the measure of the gift of Christ. We possess the dust of gold rather than the gold itself, a few rose leaves rather than the garden, the grape gleanings rather than the vintage. Let us afresh seek to possess the fulness of the blessing he came to bestow. He means to make us unutterably peaceful and pure; and we ought not to be satisfied with less. Oh for an experience that will correspond with the "Unspeakable Gift"!

We must not miss the great practical lesson of the text. The theme of the chapter is that of ministering to the saints. The apostle is exhorting the Corinthians to acts of generosity and sacrifice, and by way of motive he skillfully concludes his appeal with the text, "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift". If God has been so magnificent in his generosity to us, what ought we to deny our brother? Our thanks for Heaven's infinite gift must be expressed in our practical sympathy with the sons and daughters of misfortune and suffering. He who was rich, for our sakes became poor, and we must drink in his spirit and follow in his footprints. *Condensed* from *Studies in Christian Character,* by *Dr. W. L. Watkinson.*

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

How do you give? Gladly, or grudgingly? Meanly, or generously? Carelessly, or lovingly? Learn Whittier's words—

Hands that ope but to receive
Empty close; they only live
Richly who can richly give.

Is there a heart thrust for you in these lines of Nixon Waterman's—

We shall do so much in the years to come,
But what have we done today?
We shall give our gold in a princely sum,
But *what did we give today?*

"Men and Missions" printed recently a roll of honor of New York churches which give more for mission work than they spend on church expenses; does your church belong on a similar roll of your city?

Our Prayer. Make us more generous givers, O God, than we have ever been before; giving gladly, never grudgingly; giving because we wish to give, not because others expect it or approve it; giving from a heart of love for thy helpless, needy ones; giving through them to thee. We love thee because thou didst first love us; and we give to thee because thou didst first give to us a gift immeasurably great—the gift of thy Son Jesus Christ, for whom we praise and thank thee now and always.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. How to dispense charity effectively. Is it merely a matter of rightly-organized, sound economics?
2. The Second Epistle to the Corinthians. See pp. 36, 37 of our Introduction.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. Where had Paul been on this Third Missionary Journey before reaching Ephesus? (Acts 18.23; 19.1.) 2. When was Paul first at Ephesus? (Acts 18.19-21.) 3. Tell the story about the magicians of Ephesus burning their books. (Acts 19.13-20.) 4. Describe Ephesus in Paul's day. (*Guide,* p. 331.) 5. What term is given the Christians in Acts 19.23? 6. Who was Demetrius and why was he opposed to Paul? (Acts 19.23-28.) 7. What were the "Seven Wonders of the World"? 8. What can you learn about the temple of Diana at Ephesus? (*Guide,* p. 331.) 9. What does Professor Ramsay tell us about the shrines of Diana? (*Guide,* p. 328.) 10. What was "the image which fell down from Jupiter"? (*Guide,* p. 327.) 11. For what purposes were Greek theatres used, and how were they built? (*Guide,* p. 326.) 12. What festival was probably in progress at this time? (*Guide,* p. 326.) 13. What was the duty of an Asiarch, why was the office sought, and why could only wealthy men hold it? (*Guide,* p. 327.) 14. What were the duties of the town-clerk? (*Guide,* p. 327.) 15. What is the meaning of "temple-keeper of the great Diana"? (*Guide,* p. 327.) 16. What does Paul say about the troublous times at Ephesus in Acts 20.18, 19; 1 Cor. 15.32; 16.9; 2 Cor. 1.8?

Questions to Think About. 1. What question of Demetrius shows why he stirred up the mob against Paul? 2. Why did he give two reasons in verse 27? 3. What sort of man was Demetrius? 4. What sort of man was the town-clerk? 5. Why would the mob not listen to Alexander when they perceived he was a Jew? (*Guide,* p. 327.) 6. Who wrote our Golden Text? 7. Is money an evil thing? 8. What characteristics is the love of money likely to develop in one? 9. What wealthy men can you name who do not love their money for its own sake? 10. What should be our attitude toward money? 11. What is the meaning of "vested interests"? 12. What should be our attitude toward the right when it interferes with our personal interests?

Note-Book Work. In your Note-Book about the Epistles of Paul, write what you know about his Second Epistle to the Corinthians. See pp. 36, 37 of our Introduction. In your Book about "Lessons from Paul's Words", write what he said about "The Grace of Giving".

THE RIOT AT EPHESUS

Golden Text

The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. 1 Timothy 6.10

LESSON Acts 19.23-41: verses 29-41 printed MEMORIZE verses 29, 30

29 And the city was filled with the confusion: and they rushed with one accord into the theatre, having seized Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel. 30 And when Paul was minded to enter in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not. 31 And certain also of the Asiarchs, being his friends, sent unto him and besought him not to adventure himself into the theatre. 32 Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the assembly was in confusion; and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together. 33 And they brought Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander beckoned with the hand, and would have made a defence unto the people. 34 But when they perceived that he was a Jew, all with one voice about the space of two hours cried out, Great *is* Diana of the Ephesians. 35 And when the townclerk had quieted the multitude he saith, Ye men of Ephesus, what man is there who knoweth not that the city of the Ephesians is temple-keeper of the great Diana, and of the *image* which fell down from Jupiter? 36 Seeing then that these things cannot be gainsaid, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rash. 37 For ye have brought *hither* these men, who are neither robbers of temples nor blasphemers of our goddess. 38 If therefore Demetrius, and the craftsmen that are with him, have a matter against any man, the courts are open, and there are proconsuls: let them accuse one another. 39 But if ye seek anything about other matters, it shall be settled in the regular assembly. 40 For indeed we are in danger to be accused concerning this day's riot, there being no cause *for it*: and as touching it we shall not be able to give account of this concourse. 41 And when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

I. Demetrius and the Silversmiths Stir Up a Riot, 23-34.
   1. Greed the Reason for the Riot, 23-28.
   2. Paul's Companions Seized, but Paul is Kept from the Mob, 29-32.
   3. Alexander's Attempt to Defend the Jews, 33-34.

II. The Townclerk Quells the Riot, 35-41.
   1. Urges the Mob to Do Nothing Rash, 35-37.
   2. Refers them to the Regular Court, 38-39.
   3. Reminds them of the Danger they themselves Incur, and Dismisses them, 40-41.

29. *The city was filled with confusion.* Read verses 23-28.—*They rushed into the theater.* In Greek cities the theater was the place not only for games, but for popular assemblies. It was an immense, roofless building resembling a modern hippodrome. Tiers of seats rose one above another save on the straight side where the stage was on a level with the lowest seats. The capacity of the theatre at Ephesus has been variously estimated at from twenty-four to fifty-six thousand.—*Gaius.* This was a common Roman name; nothing further is known about him, for he is not to be identified with the Gaius from Derbe mentioned in Acts 20.4.—*Aristarchus.* He is mentioned in Acts 20.4 as coming from Thessalonica; in Acts 27.2 as sailing with Paul to Rome; in Col. 4.10 as Paul's fellow-prisoner; and in Philemon verse 24 as Paul's fellow-worker.

31. *The Asiarchs.* Officers of the Province of Asia. Their presence in Ephesus at this time has led to the supposition that it was May—the time of the Ephesian games. The historian Mommsen tells us that only a wealthy man

DIANA OR CHRIST.

From a Painting by De Long

(Representing a Christian maiden of the first century being asked to sprinkle a little incense on the altar of a goddess. To refuse means death.)

could be Asiarch, for he had to bear a large share of the expense of these games. It was an honorary position much sought after on account of its outward splendor; the festal entrance into the town in purple dress and with chaplet on the head, preceded by a procession of boys swinging their vessels of incense, was to the Greeks of Asia Minor what the olive-branch of Olympia was among the Hellenes. Paul's standing in Ephesus is indicated by his connection with the different Asiarchs there.

32. An admirable description of all mobs!

33. *Alexander.* It is thought that he was "Alexander the coppersmith" who afterwards "did much evil" to Paul (1 Tim. 1.20; 2 Tim. 4.14).—*Would have made a defence.* Probably he purposed disclaiming for himself and his fellow Jews any share in Paul's deeds.

34. *When they perceived that he was a Jew.* They refused to hear him because he was a Jew. "A Jew, though tolerated by law, and even respected for his wealth and for his strange religious lore, was no general favorite; and now that the Ephesians were charged with the electricity of patriotic and religious fervor, the sight of a Jew daring to address them in their theater was just the stimulus to create an explosion."—*Diana of the Ephesians.* See below.

35. *The town clerk.* "The city of Ephesus was 'free' and retained its Greek constitution, which was democratic in form. There was a Senate, to which power gravitated in imperial times. But nominally Ephesus was still governed by the people. An assembly was held three times a month, and these meetings were the regular, or ordinary, assemblies. The substantial authority of the assembly was in the hands of its secretary, or town-clerk—the official who summoned and dismissed the assembly (verse 41), prepared the official decrees, kept the minutes and acted as chairman. Thus the town-clerk would naturally be one of the magnates of the city; and this we find to have been the case from the inscriptions, in which the secretary often appears as holding also the highest offices."—*The city of the Ephesians is temple-keeper of the great Diana.* "The usual meaning of νεωκόρος is a temple-sweeper, or temple-keeper; it afterwards became an honorary title, and is so used in this passage. It was conferred on persons and cities. Particular cities were appointed guardians of particular deities; and thus Ephesus received the honorable appellation of the guardian of the great Diana. This title is of frequent occurrence on the coins of Ephesus. Thus one of the coins of Nero has on it the figure of the temple of Diana, with the word νεωκόρου; a coin which is of peculiar interest, as it was contemporary with the time of Paul's residence in Ephesus." (*Gloag.*) An inscription of the second century calls Ephesus "doubly temple-keeper of the Emperor and temple-keeper of Artemis (Diana)". Tacitus informs us that the town which possesses a temple dedicated to the Emperor by the Diet of the Province bears on that account the honorary predication of "the (imperial) temple-keeper". Ephesus had two such temples, therefore it was called doubly temple-keeper of the Emperor.—*The image which fell down from Jupiter.* The italics show that the word *image* is not in the original Greek: it has been supplied by the translators. It has been suggested that it may not have been an idol but a meteoric stone in which the goddess was supposed to dwell. Jupiter was the supreme deity; in the A. V. it reads "from heaven". Priests would say that the image was a gift from Jupiter.

Coin of Ephesus. Temple of Diana, with the Greek word for Temple-Keeper underneath: Figure of Diana

38. *Demetrius and the craftsmen that are with him.* "When we consider the immense and widespread influence of the Ephesian Artemis, we must acknowledge that vast numbers of pilgrims, coming even from considerable distances, continually visited her shrine, and that vast numbers of "naoi" were needed to supply the increasing demand. Workers in marble and workers in terra-cotta drove a thriving trade through their connection with the temple, and this connection was directed and organized by Demetrius, evidently as guild master.

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The silver-smiths were, of course, the craft of higher standing, greater skill in delicate work, larger profits, and therefore greater wealth and influence, than the potters and marble-workers. How natural, then, it is that it should be a silversmith who gathered together a meeting of the associated trades and organized a disturbance! The less educated workmen followed the lead of the great artisan" (*W. M. Ramsay*).—*The courts are open.* Or, *court days are kept,* RVm. "For judicial purposes the Roman provinces were divided into shires (conventions), each with its assize town. In the province of Asia, Ephesus was the chief assize town; and accordingly court days were kept there, when justice was administered by the proconsul, who represented the supreme authority of Rome" (*Rackham*).—*There are proconsuls.* There was only one proconsul in Asia. "The plural is colloquial, 'there are such things as law courts and proconsuls'."

A Silversmith. From an Engraved Gem

39. *In the regular assembly.* "The imperial government was very jealous of the right of popular assemblies. We may therefore conclude with confidence that the Roman officials were unlikely to give leave for any assembly beyond that certain regular number which was agreed upon and fixed beforehand. Thus the "regular" assemblies had come to be practically equivalent to the "lawful" assemblies; the extraordinary assemblies called by the officers of the city, which in the Greek period had been legal, were now disallowed and illegal, and extraordinary assemblies were now only summoned by Roman officials. It was, therefore, necessary for Demetrius to wait until the next regular assembly, before he could have any opportunity of legally bringing any business before the People" (*Ramsay*).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

23. *Silver shrines of Diana.* The innumerable worshippers of the goddess required innumerable dedicatory offerings of the style which was most likely to please her. A great city erected a great shrine with a colossal statue of the goddess, private individuals propitiated her with miniature shrines, containing embodiments of her living presence. The vast temple near Ephesus and the tiny terra-cotta shrine were equally acceptable to Artemis, she accepted from her votaries offerings according to their means. She dwelt neither in the vast temple nor in the tiny terra-cotta: she was implicit in the life of nature, she was the reproductive power that kept the great world ever the same amid the constant flux of things. Mother of all and nurse of all, she was most really present wherever the unrestrained life of nature was most freely manifested, in the woods, on the mountains, among the wild beasts. Her worshippers expressed their devotion and their belief in her omnipresence by offering shrines to her, and doubtless by keeping shrines of the same kind in their own homes, certainly also by placing such shrines in graves beside the corpse, as a sign that the dead had once more gone back to the mother who bore them. The temple and the sacred precinct were crowded with dedications; and the priests often cleared away the old and especially the worthless offerings to make room for new gifts. *W. M. Ramsay,* in *The Church in the Roman Empire.*

28. *Great is Diana of the Ephesians.* They only knew from the shouts of the first rioters that the worship of Artemis was concerned; and for about two hours the vast assembly, like a crowd of devotees or howling dervishes, shouted their invocation of "Great Artemis". "Great Artemis" was a common formula of devotion and prayer, as is attested by several inscriptions. In this scene we can not mistake the tone of sarcasm and contempt, as Luke tells of this howling mob; they themselves thought they were performing their devotions, as they repeated the sacred name; but to Luke they were merely howling, not praying. *W. M. Ramsay,* in *Paul the Traveller.*

29. *The city was filled with the confusion.* Throughout the early centuries the

city mob, superstitious, uneducated, frivolous, swayed by the most commonplace motives, were everywhere the most dangerous and unfailing enemy of Christianity, and often carried the imperial officials farther than they wished in the way of persecution. *W. M. Ramsay,* in *Paul the Traveller.*

40. *We are in danger to be accused concerning this day's riot.* There is no interference with the public affairs of these towns—nay, not even with public disturbances consequent on the "right of public meetings", until a serious riot takes place. Then the town authorities are held responsible by the Romans, and perhaps punished and dismissed, or else the festival which led to the disturbancy may be suppressed for a time by the Roman governor. An interesting inscription from Ephesus contains an appeal to the proconsul L. Mestrius Florus (83-84 A. D.) to permit the celebration of the mysteries of Demeter Thesmophorus and Carpophorus and of the Augustan gods. It says that these festivals have been sanctioned by kings, emperors, and yearly proconsuls, as their letters testify. Even though fragmentary, this text is an important elucidation of the fears of the "town clerk" in the Acts, who tells the people that they run the risk of being held accountable for any uproar. *John P. Mahaffy,* in *The Silver Age of the Greek World.*

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. What did Paul say to the Athenians about worshipping idols? What traveling companions of Paul have we heard about? How was Paul saved from danger by friends at Damascus? How did friends save him from harm when he first preached at Jerusalem? What did friends do for him at Thessalonica to get him away from a mob? How was he helped by friends away from Berœa? Who persecuted Paul at Philippi because Paul had been the means of pecuniary loss to him?

Close of the Second Missionary Journey. Our history given in connection with the lesson of four weeks ago, Paul at Corinth, traced the course of Paul's second missionary journey from Antioch in Syria back to Antioch again. At Antioch Paul spent "some time". Professor Ramsay believes that he wrote while there the Epistle to the Galatians; others date that letter later, about the close of his return visit to Ephesus.

Beginning of the Third Missionary Journey. For the last time Paul started forth from Antioch; this time upon his third missionary journey as we term it,

which lasted from 53 to 57 A. D. See page 14 of this *Guide*. Passing through Tarsus and the Cilician Gates he revisited in order the churches he had founded in the region of Galatia and Phrygia,—Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch of Pisidia—and "established all the disciples".

Meanwhile Apollos, an eloquent Alexandrian Jew, came to Ephesus and taught in the synagogue. While what he taught about Jesus was accurate, yet his knowledge was limited, he knew "only the baptism of John". Priscilla and Aquila instructed him further. Armed with letters from the brethren he crossed into Achaia and was of great help to the Church at Corinth.

Paul's Arrival at Ephesus. From Antioch in Pisidia Paul continued his journey to Ephesus. His first work was to instruct twelve "John the Baptist's disciples", who were then "baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus" and received the Holy Spirit. Paul remained at Ephesus probably from A. D. 54 to A. D. 57, a longer time than in any other city which he visited on his missionary tours. During this time he wrote First Corinthians, and possibly organized the Churches of Colossæ and Hierapolis, and Ephesus and others of the "Seven Churches" in Asia (Rev. 1.11).

Break with the Jews. After preaching for three months in the synagogue at Ephesus, Paul was obliged to break with the Jews, for many of them publicly denounced him and his gospel. With his followers he went to the school of Tyrannus and there labored for two years with such success that the influence of his preaching extended throughout the province of Asia, both among the Jews and the Greeks.

Jewish Exorcists. Miracles wrought by Paul convinced the people that God was manifesting his power through him, and the sick and demon-possessed were cured, as they believed, by means of handkerchiefs and aprons brought to them from Paul. Some of the wandering Jewish exorcists, among them the seven sons of Sceva, doubtless heard Paul bid evil spirits depart in the name of Jesus Christ, and listening thought they had gained the secret, a new name to conjure with. On one occasion two of the sons of Sceva attempted to cure a demon-possessed by naming over him the name of "Jesus whom Paul preacheth", but with poor success. The demon-possessed said scornfully, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but ye, who are ye?" and then attacked them furiously, tearing their garments and wounding them so that they made their escape with difficulty. This event made a deep impression on all. Jews and Greeks were over-awed and the name of Jesus was magnified. Many of the believers came and confessed that they had been guilty of evil practices, and many professional magicians proved the sincerity of their intention of giving up their arts by bringing the scrolls containing their secrets, and publicly burning them. These scrolls could have been sold for fifty thousand pieces of silver. In this way grew the word of the Lord and prevailed.

Paul's Departure Delayed. Luke tells us that Paul's purpose now was to return to Macedonia and Achaia on his way to Jerusalem, and then to embark on a new enterprise to Rome. From Paul's letter to the Romans (15.24), we know that his plan included a visit to Spain, the chief center of Roman civilization in the west. Paul wished to strengthen the disciples in Macedonia and Achaia and also to finish the collection from the Gentile churches for the poor Christians at Jerusalem, which he would himself deliver. To prepare the way for this visit, he sent on to Macedonia his assistants, Timothy and Erastus, while he tarried yet awhile in Ephesus, for a great door and effectual was opened unto him, and there were many adversaries (1 Cor. 16.9).

Demetrius' Business Losses Lead him to Start a Riot against Paul. Paul's preaching of Christianity at Ephesus interfered with the profits of the makers and sellers of shrines of Diana. A silversmith named Demetrius called a meeting of those engaged in his own and kindred trades, and easily aroused them to the danger that threatened their business. Multitudes not only at Ephesus but throughout Asia were accepting Paul's teaching that images made by hands were not gods, and soon there would be no sale for their shrines. A pretext other than self-interest must be had for action, however, and this Demetrius found in the danger that threatened their religion—the great goddess Diana, whom all the world worshipped, would become of no account. His hearers were filled with wrath, and shouted, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians". Others joined them, and soon there was a riot.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Ephesus, "the eye of Asia" as Pliny calls it, was the capital of the Roman province of Asia. It had a beautiful harbor at the mouth of the River Cayster, whose channel was then kept navigable for the largest sea-going vessels of the time, and it carried on a great commerce. That harbor has now become a mere marsh and it is difficult for the traveler to believe that Ephesus could ever have been a seaport.

The Temple of Diana (or Artemis) at Ephesus was one of the "Seven Wonders of the World". Dear Farrar thus describes it in his "Life and Work of St. Paul". "It gleamed far off with a star-like radiance. Its peristyle consisted of 120 pillars of the Ionic order, hewn out of Parian marble. Its doors of carved cypress-wood were surmounted by transoms so vast and solid that the aid of miracles was invoked for their elevation. Some of the pillars were carved with designs of exquisite beauty. Within were the masterpieces of Praxiteles and Phidias and Scopas and Polycletus. Paintings by the greatest of Greek artists adorned the inner walls. The roof of the temple itself was of cedar-wood supported by columns of jasper on bases of Parian marble. On these pillars hung gifts of priceless value, the votive offerings of grateful superstition. At the end of it stood the great altar adorned by the bas-relief of Praxiteles, behind which fell the vast folds of a purple curtain. Behind this curtain was the dark and awful shrine in which stood the most sacred idol of classic heathendom."

The theatre, where the mob cried "Great is Diana of the Ephesians", was located on the western slope of Mount Coresus. It has been more lasting than the harbor, for excavations have revealed its ruins. Sitting on the highest row of seats and almost numbed by the oppressive solitude of the present, I could nevertheless look across the great open space and down to the harbor, and picture that excited, shouting throng surging toward me, and could well believe that it must have been the memory of this howling, raging mob which led Paul to say "I fought with wild beasts at Ephesus".

Luke, the writer of this scene, spent his last years here at Ephesus, as did also John, the beloved disciple. John labored here before he was exiled to Patmos, and returning here in the reign of Nerva, remained until his death, according to the disciple of Polycarp, the pupil of John.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

A writer in *Forward* makes a study of the way in which the silversmith and the town clerk swayed men. The silversmith made his appeal to passion and to selfishness, and it did not take long to raise a howling mob ready to do his will. The town clerk, too, had self interest at stake, for such tumult might imperil his office, and was like the silversmith also in his knowledge of men and how to sway them. He made his appeal to pride and the fear of evil consequences, and the great excitement suddenly appeared a ridiculous ado about nothing. From this study the writer draws the lesson that to understand human nature, to learn to know our fellow-mortals and the feelings and impulses that rule them, is necessary for every one who would succeed in life. Many a teacher fails because he does not know his pupils, because he cannot place himself on their level, enter into their view of things, understand their likes and dislikes and the motives that influence them.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger and Older Pupils. A hundred years after the time of the events we are now studying, in the city of Smyrna, like Ephesus one of the great cities of the province of Asia, an immense and madly excited crowd was assembled in the stadium, or circus. Before them stood a venerable man, Polycarp, a Christian bishop. He had been kept in hiding for several days by his friends, for they knew his life was in danger, but had finally been discovered and brought before the maddened throng. The proconsul urged him to revile Christ, and his life should be spared. "Eighty and six years have I served him", Polycarp calmly answered, "how can I revile my King and my Saviour?" Above the tumult of the throng the words were shouted, "This was the teacher of Asia,

the father of the Christians, the puller down of our gods, who teacheth numbers not to sacrifice nor worship", and the demand was made that he be thrown to the wild beasts. The games were over, and it was not lawful, the director of the games declared. Then the crowd demanded that he be burned alive, and they had their way; they quickly collected logs and fagots, and Polycarp perished in the flames.

When Paul was at Ephesus, a similar tumult raged in the theater there. It was declared that Paul "hath pursuaded and turned away much people, saying that there are no gods made with hands". The people were beside themselves with excitement and anger, and could they have had their way they would have put Paul to death. The Christian disciples kept Paul from entering the theater, and the rulers of the games, who were his friends, sent word to him not to risk his life by coming to the rescue of his friends who had been seized. In our interest in these exciting events at Ephesus, we must not lose sight of their effect on Paul. He escaped with his life, indeed, but he was obliged to leave the city greatly dejected, "weighted down exceedingly", he wrote the Corinthians, because of "our affliction which befell us in Asia".

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Vested Interests

At Ephesus. In city after city on Paul's travels we have seen the opposition that met him from the Jews—at Antioch in Pisidia, at Iconium, at Lystra, at Thessalonica, at Berœa, and at Corinth. At Philippi and at Ephesus the Gentiles were the aggressors. Why? It was the masters of the "maid having a spirit of divination" who stirred up the trouble at Philippi; it was when they saw that "the hope of their gain was gone" that they accused Paul and Silas before the magistrates of setting forth "customs not lawful for Romans", and thus concealing their self-interests under the cloak of patriotic zeal, aroused the multitudes to join them in their opposition. Similar in its real motive was the opposition at Ephesus. It was the trades which flourished there, the manufacture and sale of images and shrines, which were endangered by Paul's preaching against idolatry. If the people continued to turn away from the worship of Diana to the worship of God, there would soon be no sale for these images, and no profit from the multitudes who had always come to Ephesus to worship at the great temple of Diana. The worship of Diana is endangered by "this Paul", they cried, but the fact that their trade was endangered was the real motive for stirring up the uproar.

Christianity was weighed in one side of the scales and the shrines of Diana in the other. A like estimate was made by Pliny in a letter to Trajan, written about 112 A. D., in which he approved of the latter's persecution of the Christians because it had resulted in a greater demand for fodder for the cattle raised for sacrifice.

"There is a project to have a Congress of Kings at Cambrai", reported Erasmus, "but certain persons who get nothing by peace and a great deal by war, throw obstacles in the way".

Vested Interests in Russia. For years the government of Russia encouraged the drinking of liquor because it derived an immense revenue from it: nearly five hundred million dollars a year coming into the imperial treasury from its monopoly of the sale. "There flowed from the government monopoly shops a flood of vodka out over all Russian villages, threatening the nation with economic and moral break-up", wrote a Petrograd correspondent. "It was as if the government's will and command was 'Drink! the more the better'." During the celebration of the three hundredth anniversary of the founding of the Romanoff dynasty, the Tsar traveled about his Empire, and observed everywhere "the weakness, poverty, and economic desolation that are the inevitable results of drunkenness", and he asserted that "The prosperity of the exchequer ought not to be dependent on the moral and material ruin of so many of the people". Then came the great European war, and the sale of vodka, despite the government's vested interests therein, was forbidden all over the great realm. Coming at a time when the government needed tremendous sums to carry on the war, the step was all the more wonderful. In later months the prohibition was extended, and first cognac and liquers were prohibited; then

beer and stronger wines; and finally red and white wines. In prohibiting the sale of the lighter beverages the Russian towns lost almost as much income as the Government did in prohibiting the sale of vodka. George Kennan tells us that municipalities have hitherto derived a large part of their income from licenses to sell beer and wine, which have been issued to restaurants, wine-cellars, and hotels; and it will be more difficult for them to make good this loss than it is for the Central Government to make good the loss on vodka, because the taxing powers of cities and towns are comparatively limited. The determination to eradicate drunkenness, however, is so strong that it completely overrides all financial considerations. One of the largest distillers said: "Serious as the matter may be for us, if drunkenness can be eradicated we distillers are in duty bound to welcome the reform and make every possible sacrifice for it". One of the most astonishing victories of the war has been that of Temperance in Russia in the face of all the vested interests.

Other Vested Interests. So we hear today protests against enforcing the law relating to corporations and tending to prevent evil practices. The protest is usually placed on the ground that prosperity is interfered with. No legitimate business can be hurt by eliminating the evil that may be in it. The insurance companies and the beef-packers are in a better position today than they would have been had they not gone through the cleansing process.

Gamblers and lawless liquor-sellers do not object to those who enforce the law on the ground that their lawlessness is being attacked; they always find some other subterfuge. They will say, following the example of Demetrius, "Oh, the liberty of the people is being taken away!"—*Joseph W. Folk.*

Livingstone and Vested Interests. When the Portuguese offered Livingstone a large sum for his little steamer "Lady Nyanza", he discovered that they intended to use her in the slave trade. No sum was sufficient to buy her for this purpose. Livingstone himself took the steamer to Bombay, 2,500 miles away, yet the nearest market, rather than let her fall into such a fate.

II The Love of Money is a Root of All Kinds of Evil

An Ode to Gold.

Gold! Gold! Gold! Gold!
Bright and yellow, hard and cold,
Molten, graven, hammered and rolled,
Heavy to get and light to hold;
Hoarded, barter'd, bought and sold,
Stolen, borrow'd, squander'd, doled;
Spurned by the young, but hugged by the old
To the very verge of the churchyard mould;
Price of many a crime untold;
Gold! Gold! Gold! Gold! *Thomas Hood.*

Wherein Lies the Wrong in the Love of Money. It is not money itself, nor even the desire to acquire money in abundance, that is the root of many kinds of evil. Money is a force like fire which can be put to good or ill uses. It is good to have money, to have it in abundance, and to make it serve yourself and others and God. It is evil to love money as a miser does, to hoard it for no purpose, to spend it for evil things, to let it blind your eyes to the things more valuable than money, things that money cannot buy. "Oh, wealth is a blessing worthy the best energies of the best minds when it falls into the hands that are consecrated to ideals; when it is entrusted to consciences that feel the commanding power of the Spirit." To change slightly the saying of another, a millionaire in gold will be blessed and will be a blessing if he is also a millionaire in soul.

Money Hoarded for a Noble Purpose. Some years ago in the great city of Philadelphia, a little girl came to a small Sunday-school and asked to be taken into one of the classes. The classes were all so full and the church so small, that there seemed to be no room for her. She was very much disappointed, and although she was very poor she began to save her pennies so that the church might be built bigger, and that she and other poor little children might have a place to go to Sunday-school. She didn't tell any one what she

was doing, and nobody knew she was saving the few pennies that were given to her until the pastor of that little church called at her bedside. She was very sick, and after a little while God took her out of her sufferings, and after she had passed away they found under her pillow a little, old, red pocketbook and in it they found fifty-seven pennies that she had saved, and a little scrap of paper on which was written the reason why she had saved her pennies, and her great wish that she might help to build a church where all little children might have a place. The pastor who conducted the funeral was a great, good man, and the story of that little pocketbook and those fifty-seven pennies got into the papers and the people read about it with tears in their eyes. It appealed to everybody. She was only a little girl, six and a half years old, and what could her fifty-seven pennies do? But people began to give the pastor of the little church money, and then more money and more money, and in six years those fifty-seven pennies had become $250,000. To-day if you go to Philadelphia, you will see this little girl's picture hanging in the hall of Temple College, where over fourteen hundred students attend, and that college is connected with a great church called the Baptist Temple, which seats eight thousand people, and connected with that church is a hospital for children, called the Samaritan Hospital. There is also a Sunday-school building there which is so large that all the children who want to attend can come and are gladly welcomed. *Hugh T. Kerr,* in *Children's Story-Sermons.*

How to Uproot the Love of Money. The newspapers recently told of a poor lunatic being found on the railway track gathering stones together with great excitement. He maintained that he had discovered a gold mine! How far removed from this insanity are they who trust in gold and make fine gold their confidence? Their perverted imagination beholds the final treasure of existence in the dust of the earth.

"The love of money can only be remedied by 'the expulsive power of a new affection'. If we would not have the ivy creep on the ground we must erect an object which it can embrace, and by embracing, ascend; and if we would detach the heart from embracing the dust, we must give it another and a nobler object." The spiritual ideal and hope is eternal truth and life, and if we covet earnestly the things which are above we shall not be much tempted to let our heart creep along the ground. *Dr. W. L. Watkinson.*

III Idols

Great is the Idol Success! "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" Was Diana great? Is she still great? Where is Diana of Ephesus? What has become of her worshippers? Where are those who prostrated themselves before the great goddess? They have disappeared just as Diana has passed away. So, in our day, there are men who cry out, "Great is the god, Success!" It does not require much foresight, nor a highly developed spirit of prophecy, to realize that they who thus cry will become like the god they worship, forgotten; that, like the god before whom they bow, they must fail and fall. For there is only one permanent element in the universe and that is the eternal God, and there is only one enduring element in human life that can ultimately succeed and that is the things that are of God. *Rabbi J. Leonard Levy.*

Great is the Idol, Money! At a dinner party one evening a young woman sitting next to Tennyson annoyed the poet by speaking contemptuously of a certain marriage as being penniless. The bard rummaged in his pocket until he found a penny, which he slammed noisily upon the table, saying, "There, I give you that. That is the god you worship!"

Great are Other Gods. The Rev. F. B. Meyer thus describes a scene he witnessed in Leicester, England, years ago. "I went down to see the goings on of the Salvation Army, especially keen to witness the exhibition of idols which they had promised, and which I thought would be idols from the South Seas or India or elsewhere. I shall never forget how startled I was to see eight young men come in from the rear of the platform, each of them carrying a square sheet of cardboard; the one I saw first, covered with pipes, cigarette-holders, tobacco pouches, and things of that sort, and the others covered with feathers and bows and ribbons and sham jewelry; and I heard a man sitting behind me whisper to his mate, 'That's my pipe'; and there were women there who would indicate their bits of finery."

We may differ in our opinions as to what things are idols, but all must admit that there are idols enough now for bonfires everywhere. "What a man loves that is his God", declared Luther. "For he carries it in his heart, he goes about with it night and day, he sleeps and wakes with it; be it what it may—wealth or pelf, pleasure or renown."

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

"There is nothing more common than for men to hang one motive outside where it can be seen, and keep the others in the background to turn the machine", observes Henry Ward Beecher. To pretend to be actuated by religious zeal, when the only real motive is self-interest, is hypocritical and detestable.

It is not in Ephesus only that people have shouted because others were shouting, not themselves knowing the reason for the outcry.

"The most sensitive part of 'civilized man' is his pocket", declares Sir William M. Ramsay. Let us be great enough to judge all questions of principle upon their own merit, irrespective of how the decision will affect our own interests.

Our Prayer. O Lord, our God, may we have no other gods before thee. Keep us from making idols of money or success or ease or pleasure or of anything, however good, which may come between ourselves and thee. Grant that we may never so seek after the things that are transient that we fall into the danger of becoming indifferent to the things which are eternal. Bless, we pray thee, all who have great possessions; keep them from that love which is the root of all things evil; make them worthy stewards of that which is thine.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Trades Unions. "Trades and handicrafts were fully organized in the Greek cities of Asia, and Demetrius was, no doubt, warden of the 'guild of the silver shrine makers'." See "The Ethics of Trade and Corporate Management" in "The Kennedy Lectures", by President Hadley of Yale.

2. Abuses which exist because of private interests involved. See the First Topic; Russian Prohibition, *Outlook*, Dec. 16, 1914 and Feb. 17, 1915; "Freedom of Press vs. Freedom of Pulpit", *Outlook*, Dec. 2, 1914; Demetrius: the Pious Business Man, *Sunday School Times*, Aug. 7, 1909.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. Where had Paul been between our last lesson and this? 2. What led Paul to write 2 Corinthians from Macedonia? 3. Who joined Paul at Philippi? 4. What was Paul's work at Corinth, Acts 20.2, 3? 5. What happened at Troas? 6. What can you learn about Miletus? (*Guide*, p. 338.) 7. What did Paul suffer at Ephesus from plots of the Jews? (1 Cor. 15.32; 2 Cor. 1.8-10.) 8. Compare Paul's farewell address at Miletus with Samuel's at Gilgal. 9. What words of warning did Paul give the Ephesians? (Acts 20.28-30.) 10. How did Paul point to his record? 11. What does Paul say in Phil. 3.14 was his goal? 12. What does he say in 2 Tim. 7.8 about his course? 13. Did Paul see the Ephesians again? (*Guide*, ¶ 3, p. 339.) 14. Begin a map of Paul's Third Missionary Journey, and trace Paul's course to Ephesus.

Questions to Think About. 1. What did Paul mean in saying "I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem"? 2. What does verse 23 mean? 3. What was the "course" which Paul aimed to accomplish? 4. Why did Paul feel that he would never see the Ephesians again? 5. What is meant by the last clause of verse 26? 6. What is "the whole counsel of God" which Paul had made known to them? 7. What verse explains why Paul's conscience was clear regarding the Ephesians? 8. What do Paul's words show is the most important of all things? 9. For what purpose does Paul say he was in the world? 10. For what purpose are you in the world? 11. For what do you hold your life dear?

Memory and Note-Book Work. Memorize Acts 20.24, and Coventry Patmore's stanzas "On Parting with Friends", p. 340. Write Chapter XI, at Ephesus.

Questions upon the Book of Acts. 1. What is the purpose of the book? 2. What is the character of the book?

JOURNEYING TO JERUSALEM

Golden Text

I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace. Acts 20.32

LESSON Acts 20.16-38: verses 16-27 printed MEMORIZE verse 24

16 For Paul had determined to sail past Ephesus, that he might not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hastening, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost.

17 And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called to him the elders of the church. 18 And when they were come to him, he said unto them,

Ye yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, after what manner I was with you all the time, 19 serving the Lord with all lowliness of mind, and with tears, and with trials which befell me by the plots of the Jews; 20 how I shrank not from declaring unto you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly, and from house to house, 21 testifying both to Jews and to Greeks repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. 22 And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: 23 save that the Holy Spirit testifieth unto me in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. 24 But I hold not my life of any account as dear unto myself, so that I may accomplish my course, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. 25 And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I went about preaching the kingdom, shall see my face no more. 26 Wherefore I testify unto you this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. 27 For I shrank not from declaring unto you the whole counsel of God.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

I. In Macedonia and Greece, 1-6.
II. At Troas, 7-12.
III. The Sail to Assos, Mitylene, Chios and Miletus, 13-17.
IV. Paul's Speech at Miletus to the Elders of Ephesus, 18-35.
  1. He Reviews his Ministry among them, 18-21, 33-35.
  2. He Glances at the Future, 22-25.
  3. He is Conscious of Duty Faithfully Done, 26, 27.
  4. He Trusts them to Guard the Church from Heresies and Enemies, 28-31.
  5. He Commends them to the Protection of the Almighty, 32.
V. The Parting on the Shore, 36-38.

16. See the Historical Background.

17. *From Miletus he sent to Ephesus.* See the Geographical Background.—*The elders of the church.* Or *presbyters,* RVm. They are called bishops in verse 28. See Paul's account in Titus 1.5-9 of what such a man should be. The apostles were itinerant missionaries. In the churches they founded they established the office of deacons, and ordained elders, after the model of the Jewish synagogue. Peter in his Epistles calls himself a fellow-elder; John speaks of himself as an elder; and Paul calls these church officials sometimes elders and sometimes bishops, using the latter term, which means literally overseers, or superintendents, in churches where the Gentile element was large.

18. *From the first day that I set foot in Asia, after what manner I was with you all the time.* A space of three years, verse 31. The first day that Paul set foot in Asia is recorded in Acts 16.6, 7, but his first preaching there is recorded

in 18.19. He came to Ephesus again on this last missionary journey, Acts 19. The manner of his life with them is given in the next three verses.

19. *With trials which befell me by the plots of the Jews.* See 1 Cor. 15.32; 2 Cor. 1.8-10.

20. *How.* This depends on *Ye know,* verse 18. See verse 27. Fear of giving offence to the Jews and endangering his life did not keep him from preaching a crucified Christ, and the gospel for Gentiles as well as Jews.

21. *Repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.* "There is no other way but by repentance and faith. First, realize your sins; second, confess to Jesus Christ; and third, live as you think you ought to live" (*Chapman*).

22. *I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem.* His spirit was heavy: he felt as though he were in bonds.—*Not knowing the things that shall befall me there.*

As, at the tramp of a horse's hoof on the turf of the prairies,
Far in advance are closed the leaves of the shrinking mimosa,
So, at the hoof-beats of fate, with sad forebodings of evil,
Shrinks and closes the heart, ere the stroke of doom has attained it.
Longfellow, in *Evangeline.*

23. *The Holy Spirit testifieth unto me.* Compare Acts 8.29; 13.2; 21.4-11.

24. *But I hold not my life of any account as dear unto myself, so that I may accomplish my course. In comparison of accomplishing my course,* RVm. *Accomplish my course* is a metaphor suggested by the Greek games, especially the foot-race. See Acts 13.25; Phil. 2.16; 2 Tim. 4.7. "How the world needs such people! Men who see by a fine instinct God's ruling upon every particular situation and go straight for it, asking no reward, distracted by no fear" (*Hutton*).—*The ministry.* Object of the verb *finish.*—*Which I received from the Lord Jesus.* See Col. 1.23, 25; 1 Tim. 1.12.—*To testify the gospel of the grace of God.* To make known the good news of God's free gift of salvation is the purpose of Paul's ministry.

25. *Preaching the Kingdom.* See Mt. 24.14.—*Ye shall see my face no more.* This remark may have expressed only a presentiment on Paul's part, due to his state of mind, that his death was near at hand. Most scholars believe that he was released from the Roman imprisonment told of in Acts, and that the visit to Ephesus mentioned in the letters to Timothy (1 Tim. 1.3; 3.14; 2 Tim. 4.13; 20.) refer to a later visit there.

26. *I am pure from the blood of all men.* Compare Acts 18.6; Ezek. 3.18, 20.

27. *For I shrank not from declaring unto you.* This explains why his conscience is clear; if they rejected the gospel, it was not because he had failed to proclaim it.—*The whole counsel of God.* The good tidings concerning Jesus Christ the Son of God. "Some religions have inner courts and outer courts; secrets revealed only to the initiated, and popular teaching intended for the ignorant. Paul had no such division; Christianity would not tolerate it; the whole and the simple gospel for everyone" (*R. Bruce Taylor*).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

19. *With tears.* This shows the intensity of Paul's anxiety for the Ephesians. Tears under any strong emotion were common among oriental people.

20. *I shrank not from declaring unto you anything that was profitable.* Such openness was quite contrary to the religious ideas of the Ephesians. Mysteries, open only to the initiated, abounded at that period; and, as elsewhere, secrecy was an important element in Ephesian superstition. Such ideas of a knowledge known only to the enlightened few, who are the "elect", the "spiritual", the "knowing ones", were soon to invade the Church. In his Epistles to the Colossians Paul had to combat its incipient traces. *R. B. Rackham.*

24. *So that I may accomplish my course.* Without doubt, Paul, as a Hellenist, had seen in his youth the Greek games. In fact, there has been found at Tarsus a Greek inscription which was set up as a monument at the termination of the walls surrounding the race-course; by which is proved, what is not elsewhere found in written sources, that the native city of Paul possessed a race-course. *Lechler,* in *Apostelgeschichte.*

33. *Apparel.* It is said that the Ephesians were especially noted for their

luxurious apparel; among orientals it was accounted an important part of their wealth.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

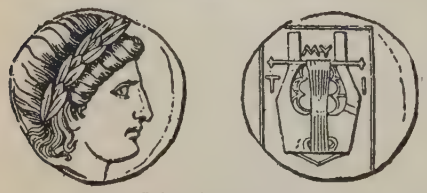
Review Questions. Why did Paul leave Ephesus? What is meant by "Asia"? When and where did Paul first set foot in Asia? What speeches of Paul have we studied? What was Paul taking with him to Jerusalem? Where had he collected it? For what lesson were the words of verse 35 (Acts 20) our Golden Text?

Bound for Jerusalem. About a year has passed since the riot at Ephesus, the subject of our lesson last week. The outbreak ended Paul's labors in that city. He went first to Troas (2 Cor. 2.12) and then to Philippi, where Titus joined him and brought good news from the Church at Corinth. Several months were spent in "these parts"—Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea. The Second Epistle to the Corinthians was written from Macedonia. Paul went on to Greece and during his three months' sojourn at Corinth wrote his Epistle to the Romans.

With the money he had collected for the poor in Jerusalem, Paul then began his journey to that city. He intended sailing from Cenchreæ, the port of Corinth, directly to Syria, but learning of a plot the Jews had made against his life, he changed his plans and went back by the way he had come through Macedonia. The longer route made it impossible for Paul to reach Jerusalem in time for the Passover, as he had hoped to do; and he now aimed to arrive there at Pentecost, fifty days later. This gave him time to stop at Philippi. Luke is now with him, for the *we* appears again in the text. Paul sailed from Neapolis, the port of Philippi, for Troas, where the other delegates to Jerusalem were awaiting him, and there spent a week.

On the last night of his stay in Troas, Paul preached to the disciples in a room on the third story of a house. There were many lights burning, and the room was crowded and hot. At midnight a lad named Eutychus was overcome by sleep and from the window where he was seated fell to the pavement below. He was taken up as dead, and great was the excitement and sorrow. But Paul rushed down and embraced him, and told the people that he would live. After sharing in the Lord's Supper, Paul talked on till morning came, when friends brought the lad alive and there was great rejoicing.

Paul's companions took ship from Troas, sailing around the promontory to Assos whither Paul went by land and joined them. Their ship stopped for the nights, when the wind fell, at Mitylene, a point opposite Chios, and again opposite Samos, and in a few days reached Miletus. Paul had passed by Ephesus, for he had not time to visit the Church there, but at Miletus he sent for the elders of that Church to come and meet him.



Coin of Mitylene

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Miletus was at this time a seaport of Caria, the most important and most famous of the Ionian colonies. Now its site is ten miles inland. Excavations which are now being carried on show that it had a theater seating twenty-five thousand people, and other great buildings, including the Serapis Temple, built in honor of the Syrian King Antiochus II and of Queen Laodike. Following the coast it was over thirty miles to Ephesus, but by a direct route between the two places it was only twenty miles. For Ephesus see p. 331.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Profit was Paul's standard in teaching. He shrank not from declaring unto the Ephesians "anything that was profitable". This should be our attitude in regard to truths discussed in class, whether they refer to questions of "higher criticism" or of modern problems. What kind of truths are profitable for your class?

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Trace on the map Paul's journey from Ephesus (where we left him last week) to Corinth and back to Troas. See the Historical Background. What happened the last night of his stay at Troas? Trace his journey to Miletus, locating the places where the ship stopped. Locate Ephesus. Why did he pass by that city?

For Older Pupils. For Paul the beginning of the end has come. The shadows are gathering about him. He knows this, and his farewell words to the elders of the church of Ephesus are most touching. Where did he meet them?

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Saying Good-bye

An Affecting Farewell. Paul's farewell words to the Ephesian elders are full of tenderness and exhortation. First he summed up his work among them, reminding them how faithfully and how humbly he had served the Lord while his heart was filled with anxiety for them and his life was threatened by Jewish plots, how he had told them all things needful for them to know, and had taught them in public and in private the essentials of religion, repentance toward God and faith toward Christ. Next he spoke of his own plans and probable fate. He was constrained by an overpowering sense of duty to go to Jerusalem, not knowing what might happen to him there; bonds and afflictions had been his portion everywhere and they awaited him in the future; he held not his life as dear to himself; his sole purpose was to run his course well, to fulfil the work to which he had been called, the proclaiming of the gospel; they would not see him again, and he called them to witness that he had faithfully warned and taught them and he was blameless if they failed to follow the truth. Then he urged them to take heed to themselves and to their charge, to be faithful in their care of the Church for which Christ had died; they would have to contend with false teachers from without and from within their own number, therefore let them be on their guard and remember how he had labored for them. And then he commended them to the care of God who was able to strengthen them and to keep them in the household of faith, and urged them to follow the example he had set in not coveting wealth, but in laboring for his own support and that of others; thus they ought to labor for the weak and remember that the Lord Jesus had himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive. As Paul concluded his speech they all knelt down while he prayed with them, and then in deep sorrow at the thought that they should have their beloved leader with them no more, the elders embraced and kissed him, and escorted him to the ship.

It is always hard to say good-bye to those with whom one has lived and worked and whom one has learned to love. If we were old Romans, Dr. Babcock tells us, who thought "Vale!" meant "forever", we might well hesitate to speak the word, but "good-bye" for Christians, even if it should be for the last time on earth, is only the difference between "good-night" and "good-morning", and if it comes hesitatingly, one should stretch it out into the loveliest of wishes, "God be with you". This was Paul's way, he commended his friends and co-workers to God.

Mr. Dan Crawford's Farewell at Fiji. On his return from his lecture tour in America and England, Dan Crawford, the modern apostolic missionary to Africa, stopped at one of the Fiji Islands and addressed a great meeting of ex-cannibals. Then the people all went with him to the wharf to say good-bye. Mr. Crawford describes the scene. First of all, you had the great ship ablaze with arc lamps, steam up, and almost off. Lined up on the wharf was this strong native choir, with flashing eyes, singing out of the darkness: "God be with you till we meet again!" And there was I with the whole crowd of my giddy fellow-passengers, leaning over the bulwarks. They were horribly embarrassed at this Sunday-go-to-meeting business rammed down their throats! The embarrassment was the more painful because some of them professed to go to church once in a blue moon. There you have black, despised natives, brave enough to do a thing that they (the whites) would rather die than do—I mean sing God's hymns with parting prayers from a public wharf.

On Parting with Friends.

If thou dost bid thy friend farewell,
But for one night though that farewell may be,
Press thou his hand in thine.
How canst thou tell how far from thee
Fate or caprice may lead his steps ere that to-morrow comes?

Men have been known to lightly turn the corner of a street,
And days have grown to months, and months to lagging years,
Ere they have looked in loving eyes again.
Parting at best is underlaid with tears and pain;

Therefore, lest sudden death should come between,
Or time, or distance, clasp with pressure true
The hand of him who goeth forth. Unseen,
Fate goeth too;
Yea, find thou always time to say
Some earnest word betwixt the idle talk,
Lest with thee, henceforth, night and day,
Regret should walk.

Coventry Patmore, in the *Record of Christian Work.*

II The Life Held Dear

Two Ways of Holding Life. A recent writer calls attention to the notice in a metropolitan paper of the death of a prominent citizen. The notice stated his name, an historic one, and mentioned his family, then it gave the various social organizations with which he had been connected, and concluded with these words: "He was a well-known patron of the turf; he was one of the best connoisseurs of wines in America, and was always present at every first night at the theatre and opera." Evidently this man held his life as dear unto himself, not as dear unto his Maker.

Paul does not say that he does not hold his life of any account, of any value, but that he does not hold it of any account as dear unto himself. He does not consider that his life was given to him alone, that it has worth only for what he himself can "get out of it", but he has a higher motive in living—for to me to live is Christ, he says, Phil. 1.21, and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me, Gal. 2.20. He measures the value of his life wholly by what he can accomplish for Christ.

Life Held Dear to Self. A young man once came to Dr. Dale for advice, and, in answer to a question, said that his idea of living was to take life easy. "Well, my boy", replied Dr. Dale, "if I were an autocrat—and I wish I were—I would put you in a suit of pig-iron and throw you in the Mersey. I am sure it would be better for you and for the world."

The Life Held Dear for Others. In the cloister of Bryn Mawr College Library is a memorial tablet bearing the inscription: "A loyal comrade, a devoted alumna, a patriotic, single-minded public servant." Does your mind picture an alumna full of years and honor? Carola Woerishoffer was a young woman who had been out of college only four years when she died. But in those four brief years she had devoted her wealth and herself with such skill and wisdom to the study of the betterment of industrial conditions of women and children, and had already accomplished so much that on her death it was affirmed "It may truthfully be said that her larger work is just beginning".

What Gives Life its Value. I know an idiot boy who spent his life in spinning a top. No doubt that boy in his dim consciousness passed through all our mortal experiences. He had his good days and his bad days, and sometimes when he went home he had the experience of one who had won a battle, and sometimes the experience of one who had lost a battle. But there is something strangely incomplete and pathetic, spending the whole of life in spinning a top. But if there were no larger significance in life than "what shall we eat or what shall we drink, or wherewithal shall we be clothed," if it were not more than that, then that idiot boy with his top was a striking picture of the race. What

are we all doing but spinning tops? The tops vary, some are big and some are small; some have more gilt than others. What is the whole universe but a great scene of empty top-spinning? The whirling suns, the stars in their courses, the planets in their movements—what are they all but colossal tops driven by idiotic forces, through eternities, in aimless cycles? Ah, if there be no intelligence in the world, no spirituality in its government, no great issue to it all, then it is a scene of pathetic emptiness, failure and despair! Only a larger interpretation of life will satisfy you. Life is utterly disappointing and incomplete without spiritual ideals, principles, ideas, and hopes. Man without spiritual instincts is always asking, Is life worth while? The man who whips his top for seventy years and keeps it going with sweat and blood, until the hum of the top dies in the silence of the grave, ought to be discontented with such a life. Discontent is the only natural thing in the universe if there are in life no deep moral purposes and no spiritual consequences; but it is another thing if the spiritual note is brought into it. The Church of Christ does not ask, "Is life worth living?" Life in the hand of a spiritual man is linked in with a larger education. It is a discipline out of which you come kings, and it leads you into a larger and imperishable inheritance. To the worldly man life is a blunder, a jest, a tragedy; to the spiritual man a discipline, a science, a triumph. *Condensed* from an *Article* by *Dr. W. L. Watkinson.*

III The Stern Business of Life

To me to Live is What? "To me to live is myself!" Suppose that it is so. What kind of an aim to a life is this? How much nobler a center our life is worthy of—our one life—which is to live forevermore; which is to live with a great center or a mean one—meanly or greatly forevermore! Think of living with oneself for ever and for ever. Think of having lived, living now, and evermore, living only for this. Look with complacency on such a life if you can—

"I lived for myself, I thought for myself,
For myself, and none beside,
Just as if Jesus had never lived,
As if he had never died."

"To me to live is Christ." Contrast it with all the other objects of life; take all the centers out of all the great lives, and compare them one by one. Can you match the life-creed of Paul—"to me to live is Christ"?

"To me to live is—business," "To me to live is—pleasure," "To me to live is—myself." We can all tell in a moment what our religion is really worth. "To me to live is"—*what?* What are we living for? What rises naturally to our heart when we press it with a test like this: "To me to live is"—what? First thoughts, it is said, are best in matters of conscience. What was the first thought that came into your hearts just then? What word trembled on your lip just now—"to me to live is"—was it business, was it money, was it self, was it Christ?

The time will come when we shall ask ourselves why we ever crushed this infinite substance of our life within these narrow bounds, and centered that which lasts for ever on what must pass away. In the perspective of eternity all lives will seem poor, and small, and lost, and self-condemned beside a life for Christ. *Henry Drummond.*

Life Means Opportunity for Service. The prophets used to call the service of the Lord a "burden". It was an awful weight upon them which they would have gladly laid down if the Lord had permitted. Never once does the Apostle use that word "burden". It is not something that he carries. It is something that lifts him up, gives lightness to his feet, expansion to his heart, magnifies him in his own eyes. He always speaks of the mercy and love which have called him to serve, the condescension which has stooped to use him, the infinite grace which has entrusted the divine treasure to such a poor earthen vessel. "I thank God that he counted me worthy, putting me into the ministry." "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, was this grace given." Never does he speak of it as a hardship, only to be endured for the sake of what will follow; never as a toiling and weary workman thinks of his labor—something to be got through with a view to the wages. Only very occasionally does he re-

fer to the rewards, the heavenly rest, and the crown of righteousness which will be given him at the end. The service itself is a great and almost sufficient reward. To have been chosen for this thing, appointed to it by the King's command, to be a vessel in the hand of the Almighty, bearing witness of his grace and sharing with Christ the glory of serving—that is the grand thing. "None of these things move me, in view of the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus."

Whatever your work for Christ, whatever the sphere in which you have to sustain the Christian character, whether your duty is to be done in school, mission, home, workshop or sanctuary, whether you glorify his name in some prominent and public capacity or simply bear witness for him in obscure ways and private places, you have been put into what St. Paul calls "the ministry". It is the ministry which you have received of the Lord Jesus. Do you regard it as St. Paul did? *J. G. Greenhough,* in *The Mind of Christ in St. Paul.*

I must Finish my Task. When Stanley found Livingstone in the heart of Africa he begged him to return home. He was old and feeble; he was destitute of men and means to enable him to make practical progress. But, like Paul, none of these things moved him. "No, no," he said to Stanley, "to be knighted by the Queen and welcomed by thousands of admirers would be pleasant, but it is impossible. It must not be. I must finish my task".

Life a Sacred Burden.

A sacred burden is this life ye bear;
Look on it, lift it, bear it solemnly,
Stand up beneath it steadfastly.
Fail not for sorrow, falter not for sin,
But onward, upward, till the goal ye win.

Fanny Kemble.

Why Are You Here? You recall the story about Dr. Gunsaulus' nephew and the burning of the Iroquois Theatre at Chicago. "What's the text you are taking for next Sunday?" the nephew asked him that day and the preacher answered, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world". "Uncle, what do you think I was born for?" was the next question. "It's more than I know", was the reply. "The same with me," added the young man, and went away wondering what opportunities life had for him. Then he reached the burning theatre and learned that the passage was choked with people. Instantly he plunged in and dragged out one after another from the seething mass of people, until he had saved thirteen. Once more he rushed into the burning building and was struck by a falling timber. As he lay dying in the hospital his uncle leaned over him and caught his words: "Uncle, to this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world—that I might save those thirteen".

When Dr. Gunsaulus was in London a few weeks later an elderly man approached him in a hotel and began talking about that fire. "I was in that fire!" he said in frenzy. "I was in that fire! I fought for my life, but I saved myself! I saved myself!" At once another man approached and led the elderly man away. Later this man apologized for any annoyance Dr. Gunsaulus might have experienced, explaining: "He was in that fire of which you were speaking; he fought like fury and saved himself; but he lost his reason. He is quite harmless. I am traveling with him. His family has sent him around the world, in the hope that his reason may return with change of scene."

Dr. B. F. Meyer quoted these incidents in a recent address at Northfield and then said:

"I saved myself." There you have it. On the one hand, the young man who plunged into the fire, and at the end of a heroic struggle could say, "I saved thirteen". On the other, this man, who had the keys to everything that this life can give, yet was able to say nothing more than: "I saved myself. I saved myself".

I ask you individually: What is going to be the verdict of your life? Which of these two will it be? At the end, will you have saved others, or will you only have saved yourself? I stand as between the living and the dead, whilst God's great eternity is pressing in upon us all, and I plead with every young life here that it shall be yielded to the Divine Redeemer, so that you may help God to get something done, even though it be in but one brief moment of your life.

Often a girl or a lad will go on doing simple, loving things to brother or

sister, mother or father, year after year, and life seems to be one dull, monotonous level. The young soul thinks itself wasted. It does not realize that every time a noble act is done it is generating power. Then the supreme moment arrives, with its clarion call, and the whole of the preceding discipline suddenly culminates in one splendid hour of life. One is well repaid if all the commonplaces of life lead up finally in one supreme act.

Jesus said, "To this end"—the end of redemption—"was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth". That is the ideal. Every one of us has an ideal, and we are summoned to bear witness to our ideal as it shines on us from the face of Christ.

Then Dr. Meyer urged each one to offer this prayer: "Father, thy child wants to find his place and to fulfil his share in thy great redemptive purpose".

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

Paul knew why he was alive. There was a great underlying purpose in his living. Are we living in this life without a purpose? Let us "gird up the loins of our mind," as Peter says, and think on these things.

Paul held not his life as dear unto himself. Do we? Are we trying to get out of it all we can, or are we trying to do in it all we may? Do we say that the world owes us a living, or do we say that we owe our life to the world? Paul's life's course was an ever onward one; so may ours be. Paul never slackened his efforts to reach his goal; we need not. Paul's motive in life was to be and do in it all that God meant him to be and to do; his motive should be ours. Paul could say, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; may his glad assurances be ours.

Our Prayer. Life is thy gift, Heavenly Father. Help us to live it nobly, valuing it not for what we may get out of it, but for what we may do with it; not for ourselves, but for thee. To Paul thy service was never a burden, again and again he thanked thee for counting him worthy to be thy minister: may we be imitators of him in this, and though our work for thee is humble, carried on in obscure ways and places, may it ever glorify thee. For an opportunity of leading a glad, happy life of noble service we thank thee, Lord.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Paul's friendships. See Chapter XVII of Hugh Black's "Gift of Influence".
2. Making life worth while. See the Second and Third Topics.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. What does Paul call himself in the introduction to his letters to the Romans, Philippians and to Titus? 2. What ground is given in 1 Cor. 9.1 for Paul's enemies questioning his right to be called a minister? 3. Why did Paul write Second Corinthians? (*Guide*, p. 36.) 4. What led him to give this account of his sufferings? 5. What events recorded in the Book of Acts had not occurred at the time Paul penned these words? (*Guide*, p. 345.) 6. What persecutions of Paul have our lessons thus far recorded? 7. What advantages of faith had both Paul and his adversaries? 8. What distinctions had Paul in greater measure than they? 9. Why was it the Jewish custom to give thirty-nine rather than the forty legal blows? (*Guide*, p. 345.) 10. What proof besides his suffering does Paul give of his right to be called a minister of Christ? (2 Cor. 12.1-6). 11. What does Paul say about his "thorn in the flesh"? (2 Cor. 12.7-10.) 12. On your map continue Paul's course to Miletus.

Questions to Think About. 1. What does the twenty-first verse mean? (*Guide*, p. 344.) 2. What is the distinction in the words "Hebrews, Israelites, Seed of Abraham"? (*Guide*, p. 345.) 3. What is the force of the aside in verse 23? (*Guide*, p. 345.) 4. What is the meaning of verse 29? (*Guide*, p. 346). 5. Compare Paul's sufferings with those of Jesus. (*Guide*, p. 350.) 6. Do Paul's words about himself sound like boasting? 7. Do you consider that it was boasting? (*Guide*, p. 348.) 8. Was Paul complaining because he had had so much to endure? 9. How do your trials and troubles compare with Paul's?

Memory and Note-Book Work. Memorize 2 Cor. 11.21-30. Write Chapter XII, Journeying to Jerusalem.

PAUL'S SORROWS AND COMFORTS

Golden Text

My grace is sufficient for thee: for my power is made perfect in weakness. 2 Corinthians 12.9

LESSON 2 Corinthians 11.21-12.10: 2 Corinthians 11.21-33 printed
MEMORIZE verses 25, 26

21 I speak by way of disparagement, as though we had been weak. Yet whereinsoever any is bold (I speak in foolishness), I am bold also. 22 Are they Hebrews? so am I. Are they Israelites? so am I. Are they the seed of Abraham? so am I. 23 Are they ministers of Christ? (I speak as one beside himself) I more; in labors more abundantly, in prisons more abundantly, in stripes above measure, in deaths oft. 24 Of the Jews five times received I forty *stripes* save one. 25 Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day have I been in the deep; 26 *in* journeyings often, *in* perils of rivers, *in* perils of robbers, *in* perils from *my* countrymen, *in* perils from the Gentiles, *in* perils in the city, *in* perils in the wilderness, *in* perils in the sea, *in* perils among false brethren; 27 *in* labor and travail, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. 28 Besides those things that are without, there is that which presseth upon me daily, anxiety for all the churches. 29 Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is caused to stumble, and I burn not? 30 If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things that concern my weakness. 31 The God and Father of the Lord Jesus, he who is blessed for evermore knoweth that I lie not. 32 In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king guarded the city of the Damascenes in order to take me: 33 and through a window was I let down in a basket by the wall, and escaped his hands.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

I. Paul Fears for the Loyalty of the Corinthians, 11.1-4.
II. He Feels the Need of Defending his Apostleship, 11.5-20.
III. He is the Equal of his Opponents in Birth, 11.21, 22.
IV. He Exceeds them in Labors and Sufferings Borne in the Service of Christ, 11.23-12.7.
  1. His Labors and Sufferings, 11.23-28.
  2. The Cost he Pays for his Sympathy with his Converts, 11.29-31.
  3. His Escape from Damascus, 11.32.
  4. His Visions and Revelations, 12.1-7.
V. His Thorn in the Flesh and the Grace Given him to Bear it, 12.7-10.

21. *I speak.* In the preceding verses of this chapter: see the Historical Background.—*By way of disparagement, as though we had been weak.* The usual interpretation is: "I confess to my shame I was far too weak, as they call it, to act in the way the others did'. And Allan Menzies further explains: "There is an impression among the Corinthians that Paul is not when present a forcible person (10.1, 10; 13.3, 4). Here when it is a question of upholding himself against the intruders at Corinth, he allows that it is true. It is not a creditable thing he has to speak of, yet he must say it, he has come short in firmness and in show of authority; he may be thinking of the unworthy way in which he was treated at Corinth on a certain occasion (2.5; 7.12). But the discredit is for the Corinthians, too, that they should prefer those who bully them and exploit them to one who treated them gently, and insisted so little on his rights and dignity. Should they have thought him weak, is not that a discredit to them? He will show them that it was."—*Yet whereinsoever any is bold, I am bold also.* Whatever any one dares, I dare. Whatever claims the

intruders at Corinth are bold enough to put forward, those I can put forward also. If they boast, I can excel them in boasting.—*I speak in foolishness.* By this aside, Paul expresses his own opinion of one who boasts, he does not admire himself while boasting, but he proceeds to do so because the occasion requires it, his words are forced from him in self-defence.

22. *Are they Hebrews? They* refers to Paul's adversaries at Corinth, the false apostles as he calls them, verses 12-15. They seem to have claimed authority over the Gentiles at Corinth because they belonged to the ancient covenant people, and Paul says he can make the same claim for himself. Hebrews is the oldest name of God's chosen people, the one which in the Old Testament distinguishes them from the native people of Canaan, and in the New Testament distinguishes the Hebrew (or Aramaic) speaking Jews from those Jews who spoke also the Greek language, as in Acts 6.1.—*Are they Israelites? Israelites* is from *Israel,* the sacred name given by God to Jacob, the ancestor whom they all claimed. There were sons of Abraham who were descendants of Esau; the chosen people were descendants of Jacob. See Rom. 9.4.—*The seed of Abraham.* This phrase recalls the blessings promised by God to Abraham's descendants. In Phil. 3.5 Paul adds that he was of the tribe of Benjamin and a Pharisee. In Paul's mind there was probably a climax here: Hebrews "by descent"; Israelites "in privilege"; the seed of Abraham "in respect of promised blessings".

23. *Are they ministers of Christ?* This is their boast, and they seem to have questioned Paul's right to be called a minister or an apostle because he had not seen Jesus Christ on earth, 1 Cor. 9.1. Paul claims to be more of a minister than they, and gives his proofs.—*I speak as one beside myself.* In this aside Paul again apologizes for his boasting. As Allan Menzies observes, "Paul with a last shiver at the plunge he is taking—not only a fool, an actor, but a madman must he now appear—takes up the recital of all he has come through". —*I more.* I am a minister of a higher degree.—*In prisons more abundantly.* Three imprisonments are mentioned in the Acts, but only one before the date of this letter, that of Acts 16.24.—*In stripes above measure.* Recall Acts 16.23.—*In deaths often.* In dangers that threatened death. Recall Acts 14.19 and see Rom. 8.36.

24. *Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one.* This was the legal number; see Dt. 25.3. Only thirty-nine stripes were given lest, through a miscount, the legal number might be exceeded. "The later rabbis say that the scourge was made with three thongs, so that each blow inflicted three stripes; and only thirteen strokes were given to make up the prescribed number of thirty-nine lashes." Dwight L. Moody was wont to question Paul thus: "Now Paul, they have beaten you, and they are going to beat you again. What are you going to do about it? Are you going to continue preaching? If you are, let me give you a little advice. Don't be quite so radical; be a little more conservative; just use a little finer language, and—so to speak—cover up the Cross with beautiful words and flowery sentences; tell men that they are pretty good after all; try to pacify the Jews, make friends with them; and get in with the world. Don't be so earnest, Paul. Now come, take our advice! What are you going to do?" And Paul answers: "Do! I do this one thing—I press toward the mark of my high calling".

25. *Thrice was I beaten with rods.* This was a Roman scourging. The only one of these beatings recorded was that at Philippi, Acts 16.22.—*Once was I stoned.* At Lystra, Acts 14.19.—*Thrice I suffered shipwreck.* Up to this time no shipwreck is narrated in Acts; evidently Paul made more voyages than have been recorded.—*A night and a day have I been in the deep.* This might refer to a time when after a shipwreck, he floated about upon some wreckage or raft.

26. *In perils of rivers, in perils of robbers.* See p. 346.—*In perils from my countrymen.* Acts 8.23; 13.45-50; 14.5; 17.5, 13; 18.12 and (later than the writing of the letter) 20.3, 19; 21.27; 23.10, 12; 25.3.—*In perils from the Gentiles.* Acts 14.5, 19; 13.23; (also 27.42).—*Among false brethren.* Gal. 2.4.

27. *In labor and travail.* See 1 Thess. 2.9; 2 Thess. 3.8.—*In watchings.* Acts 16.25; 20.7.—*In hunger and thirst.* The sufferings enumerated in this verse may all be taken to refer to what he endured while carrying on his work among the churches. He labored with his hands to support himself, and sometimes was in want, verse 9 of this chapter. See 1 Cor. 4.11; Phil. 4.12.—*In fastings.* In-

voluntary fastings, because he did not earn enough.—*Nakedness.* See 1 Cor. 4.11.

28. *Besides those things that are without,* or, *Besides the things which I omit,* RVm. In the former reading, the reference is to the things that were without, outside of, his daily cares which he next mentions.—*Anxiety for all the churches.* A perusal of his Epistles reveals how many reasons he had for being anxious about their welfare and spiritual life.

29. *Who is weak, and I am not weak?* My sympathies are so keen that I suffer with others. This is no idle boast. Paul's letters let us see how intensely sympathetic and sensitive was his heart to all that concerned his converts.—*Caused to stumble.* Led into sin.—*And I burn not?* Burn with indignation.

30. *If I must needs glory.* His boasting of what he has suffered in the service of his Lord is forced from him, not spoken willingly.—*I will glory of the things that concern my weakness.* His opponents prided themselves on their wisdom or eloquence; he prided himself on his sufferings and privations, which implied weakness.

31. To assure his readers that he had not exaggerated his tale of sufferings, he makes this solemn asseveration.

32-33. The recording of this incident here seems an anticlimax, an afterthought such as most correspondents throw into their letters haphazard. The event occurred either immediately after his conversion (Lesson I of the Second Quarter) or after his return from his sojourn in Arabia which followed his conversion. Compare Acts 9.24, 25; 19.9; Gal. 1.17, and re-read the account in Acts 9.24, 25. Aretas, father-in-law of Herod the Tetrarch, was King of Nabatæa from 9 B. C. to 70 A. D. There is no mention of him in Acts: no doubt he merely complied with the demands of the Jews.—*Guarded the city.* Set a guard at the city gates to seize Paul.—*Through a window.* The house was built upon the wall.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

23. *In deaths often.* All Eastern people are given to the use of hyperbole, or exaggeration. Of course, the meaning is here that he was often in danger of death or near death, as when he was stoned at Lystra and, as his tormentors thought, killed. In verse 27 nakedness is probably another instance of the same exaggeration, for an oriental would speak of himself as naked if he were without his abba, or outer cloak.

24. *Five times received I forty stripes save one.* The Mishna describes the way in which the blows were given: The two hands of the criminal are bound to a post, and then the servant of the synagogue either pulls or tears off his clothes till he leaves his breast and shoulders bare. A stone or block is placed behind him, on which the servant stands; he holds in his hand a scourge, made of leather, divided into four tails. He who scourges lays one-third on the criminal's breast, another third on his right shoulder, and another on his left. The man smites with all his strength with one hand. Since not every one is physically able to endure so many blows—some of them dying under them—they "assessed" a delinquent beforehand, that is, they adjudged him able to endure a lesser number.

25. *Thrice was I beaten with rods.* This was the Roman punishment; the stripes were the Jewish. Though it was against the law to beat a Roman citizen, the law was sometimes disregarded, and Paul may not have declared his citizenship, as he did not in the instance recorded in Acts 16.22.

26. *In perils of rivers.* The swiftly flowing rivers in time of flood were dangerous to cross. Frederick Barbarossa was drowned on his crusade while attempting to cross the Calycadnus, a river not far from Paul's city of Tarsus.

26. *In perils of robbers.* A number of inscriptions near the site of Pisidian Antioch show the extreme insecurity that prevailed. There is an epitaph erected by Patroklos and Douda over the grave of their son Souson, slain by robbers. Another refers to armed policemen, and a third to a *stationarius,* whose duty it was to catch runaway slaves turned brigands. ***Caroline A. Skeel,* in *Travel in the First Century.***

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. At the time of Paul's conversion, what was said to Ananias about the sufferings he would have to endure for his Lord? In what city was Paul stoned and left for dead? What record have we had of Paul's imprisonment? Where has he received "stripes" at the hands of Jews? Where was he beaten with rods at the hands of the Romans? What reasons for anxiety had he had concerning the churches he had founded? In an earlier lesson from First Corinthians in what did Paul say that he gloried? Which one of the judges about whom we studied last year reduced his forces from thirty thousand to three hundred, and learned the lesson that "when he was weak, then he was strong"? What account have we had about Paul at Corinth? What led him to write his first letter to the Corinthians? Where was he when he wrote that letter? What lessons have we had from it?

Second Corinthians. See pages 36, 37 of our Introduction.

Why Paul Recounted his Sufferings for the Sake of Christ. Enemies of Paul had been trying to undermine his authority in the church at Corinth by discrediting his claims as an apostle, and chapters X-XIII of this letter contain his vindication. In chapter XI, he first refutes two charges, one that his speech was rude, and another that were he really one of the apostles he would have taken the pay to which he was entitled. The ultimate proof of his apostleship rests, however, on what he has suffered for the sake of Christ. Our lesson text begins with a statement in which he claims all that his opponents claim for themselves, and then proceeds to other credentials of his apostleship which no one but he could offer.

Why Paul Speaks Apologetically. Paul does not enjoy speaking in a way that some might call boasting, but he realizes the need of defending himself from unjust attacks. Should a man defend himself when attacked? Should he not rather allow his life to be its own defense? "As a general principle it is best to allow circumstances and time to prove the falsity of the charge," says a writer in the *Sunday School Chronicle*. "But with a man in a public position the matter stands differently. Here it is not possible to give slander rope; if an accusation be not challenged at once it will be accepted as true. Gladstone's wife was greatly interested in social and rescue work among women. Through that work a charge was once made against Gladstone, and, with political feeling running high, to have given the lie a start would have been suicidal. Gladstone at once set the law in motion, ran the offenders down, prosecuted them and saw them condemned. And *then*, after the right had vindicated itself, he set to work to obtain a remission of the sentence. That was surely the right course of action for the public man. If Paul had not met these attacks he would probably have found his influence gone."

We must keep in mind that the words of our lesson were written in answer to charges made against Paul of weakness and cowardice, that he is not boasting but defending himself, and that he is not complaining, but glorying in being thought worthy to suffer for Christ's sake. A German writer (Hausrath) well says that these words of Paul suggest the picture of an old general who bares his breast before his rebellious legions, and shows them the wound-prints which prove that he is not unworthy to be called their commander.

The Severity of Paul's Sufferings. "I will show him how many things he must suffer for my name's sake," had been the words that Ananias heard in a vision at the time of Paul's conversion. The sufferings which he had endured up to the time of the writing of this letter—before any of the events recorded in Acts 20-28 took place—are appalling in number and severity. Many of them are not recorded in the Acts, and we see how fragmentary is the biography of his life there given. Luke's purpose in writing the Acts was to portray the spread of the gospel rather than to give a full account of the life of the chief apostle.

Another Proof of Paul's Right to be Called a Minister of Christ. After recording his sufferings, Paul recalls the marvelous credentials given him in the visions and revelations of the Lord. So long ago it happened—fourteen years earlier—that it seems as if it were another person of whom he is speaking, as he recalls the wondrous moment when, unconscious of all earthly surroundings, he was exalted to the highest heaven and there heard words too holy for

human utterance. He could indeed glory in having been granted such visions, for he should be speaking only the truth, but he wished to be judged only by what others could see and hear for themselves. That he himself should not be overexalted by having had such great revelations, he had been given a thorn in the flesh to torment him, some trouble which he had repeatedly besought the Lord to remove, but the Lord had taught him its purpose was to show in his human weakness his Lord's divine power, for Christ's grace is sufficient for him. Now he is content to keep it, exulting in the weakness and persecutions endured for Christ's sake, because they bring Christ's strength. When he is weak in himself, he is strong through Christ.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

When Kate Douglas Wiggin was a young girl she established a kindergarten in the slums of San Francisco, and looking back she now says that she can not understand how any one, however young and strong, could have stood the strain of those years. "They are the three years of my whole life the most wearying, the most heart-searching, the most discouraging," she says. But this is only one side of the shield; hear her next words: "They are the most inspiring, also, I dare say, the best worth while". And then recalling delightful days in the Azores, in Venice, on the moors of Scotland, she adds: "But which of them can compare with one of the weariest days in my poor little kindergarten at Silver St., if it ended in some moral triumph? Which of them ever gave the thrill that came from some grateful mother's handclasp?"

Can you not see in Mrs. Wiggin's experience something akin to Paul's and in her words a spirit akin to his? Her words sound the same keynote as his, that it is work engaged in and suffering endured for the sake of others which counts. Paul's services and sufferings for the Master are on too high a plane for us to think of comparing with them our work for the kingdom. But we may compare our experiences with those of Mrs. Wiggin, and may rate them accordingly.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Do you like a person who brags or boasts of what he has done or can do? Some one has said that such a person is talking about himself when we want to talk about ourselves! Both our words *brag* and *boast* come to us from words that mean *to make a noise,* and Webster says that *to bluster, to crow, to talk big* mean the same thing as *to brag* or *to boast,* and his definition of these words is "to talk about one's self, or about things about one's self, for the purpose of arousing in others admiration, wonder, or envy". We often have to talk about ourselves, but it is the way in which we talk and the purpose for which we talk that determine whether we are talking foolishly or not. If you should move to another city, and on making arrangements to enter a new school should be asked just what you had studied and what your report cards had said, it would not be bragging for you to give all that information, even though you had to say that you received the highest mark in every one of your studies, but if you should tell this to people who had no interest in knowing it, and your purpose in the telling should be to have them compliment you on being so excellent a scholar, that would be boasting.

Paul was far from being a boaster, and it is fortunate for us that, in order to answer the attacks made upon him by his enemies, and to prove to the Church at Corinth that he was God's messenger, he was forced to write them who he was, what he had endured for the cause of Christ, and what revelations God had granted him.

For Older Pupils. What is the difference between happiness and blessedness? Was Paul's life a happy life or was it a blessed life? Let us recall the Beatitudes and see how many of them were realized in the life of Paul.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Lives that Live

I Count not my Life as Dear unto Myself. At one of the Northfield conferences, a few years ago, an American missionary to Africa told a story that stirred the heart of every listener. He began his work with companions as

eager as himself. One by one they succumbed to the terrible climate. Three he buried—the others he took to the coast and sent home. Then he turned back, to stand, utterly alone, in the midst of hundreds of thousands of men who had never heard the name of God. Again and again he tramped the blistered plains with his tongue so swollen that he could not speak. Thirty times he was stricken by fever, with no one to care for him. Lions attacked him, natives ambushed him; he had lived upon everything, from ants to rhinoceroses. And here was his conclusion:

"I know the great joy of walking with Jesus Christ in the midst of all this; I stand ready at this moment to go through it all again for the joy I have had in flashing the word Savior into the darkness of a great tribe! Is it God's will? That makes the wilderness a garden; that makes the desert glow with the very presence of God!" *Youth's Companion.*

The Testimony of James Chalmers, the Martyr Missionary of New Guinea. Recall the twenty-one years of my missionary life, give me back all its experiences, give me its shipwrecks, give me its standing in the face of death, give it me surrounded with savages with spears and clubs, give it me back with spears flying about me, with the club knocking me to the ground, give it me back again and I will still be your missionary.

II My Grace is Sufficient for Thee

He hath said unto me. Thus Paul introduces the beautiful words which are our Golden Text. Literally translated they read, He kept saying unto me. He did not say it only once, but again and again. Dr. A. B. Simpson's comments are helpful. "He reiterated the sweet promise, and reassured the trembling yet trusting heart of his child. I remember going through a dark tunnel with my child. The little one nestled close to me, and often in those long moments he would whisper his little fears, and I would assure him that he would soon be through. So God comforts and reassures his little children, and we need not be ashamed to tell him all our fears, and have him cheer us, and renew his covenants and promises as often as we need them."

When I am Weak, then am I Strong. Dr. W. L. Watkinson delights in piling up illustration after illustration from nature showing how frail creatures and things survive where stronger ones perish. Here is one of his illustrations from Kay Robinson.

"It is a curious thing that the extremes of heat and cold seem to be most easily endured by the flimsiest creatures. What is it that, when the frost is splitting our strongest metal waterpipes, protects the tiny tubes of life-giving moisture in the almost spectral organism of a gnat? Larger things get frost-bitten and perish. In tropical countries the tiniest insects brave the blistering midday heat which shrivels the large herbage, and drives men, birds, and animals gasping for shelter. Nature's power of preserving life touches the miraculous." He who puts into the most delicate forms of animal and vegetable life such secrets of resistance or evasion, fortifies the heart of his feeblest children with sublime increments of vitality and victory.

And elsewhere Dr. Watkinson says: "Explorers tell us that in Arctic regions the snow itself affords shelter to the vegetation of those inhospitable regions against the piercing winds that sweep over fields of everlasting ice. Under the cold defence of the snow, plants spring up, dissolve the snow a few inches around, and the part above being again quickly frozen into a transparent sheet of ice, admits the sun's rays, which cherish the plant as in a natural hothouse, until the returning summer renders such protection unnecessary. So the wisdom, love, and power of God overrule the bitterest conditions of human life, and fit us through those very conditions for the everlasting summer."

The Supporting Power of Grace Sufficient. A net used for sea-fishing is weighted along one side; otherwise it would float idly upon the surface of the water. But if it possessed weights only it would sink and be lost. Therefore along the other side are attached cork floats. Drawn down by the weights, and supported by the floats, the net is expanded for use. Many a life has proved idle, useless, and of little worth until it became weighted with trial. On the other hand, a life experiencing trial only is apt to sink into despair. Therefore God adds to it the supporting power of "grace sufficient". Thus expanded and

upheld, it fulfils its Divinely appointed purpose. So it was with Paul, who rejoiced in the combined forces of tr[illegible] and grace which made his life so abundantly fruitful in spiritual results. Remember Christ's word, "I will make you fishers of men"; do not shirk the fisherman's method! *The Christian.*

III Suffer Hardship as a Good Soldier of Jesus Christ

The Fellowship of Sufferings. Paul copied his Master. The writer of "The Knowledge of Christ" says that such oneness of life could but mean inevitably a corresponding oneness of fortune, and he gives these parallel passages from the Gospels and from Acts.

"It is enough for the disciple that he be as his Master," said the Lord. "I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus," said St. Paul.

"Then took they up stones to cast at him." "Having stoned Paul."

"The band took Jesus and bound him." "They bound him (Paul) with thongs."

"Pilate took Jesus and scourged him." "Five times received I forty stripes save one."

"One of the officers struck Jesus." "The High Priest commanded to strike him (Paul)."

"He is beside himself." "Thou...art mad." "Paul, thou art mad; thy much learning is turning thee mad."

"We found this fellow perverting the nation. He stirred up the people." "We found this man a pestilent fellow...a mover of sedition."

"He was despised and rejected of men." "We are made as the filth of the world and the offscouring of all things."

"All the disciples forsook him." "All men forsook me."

"Away with him. Crucify him." "Away with him. It is not fit that he should live."

"I have glorified thee on the earth. I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course. I have kept the faith."

What a Man Thinks about Hardships. In a long dialogue between a clergyman and a boy, the *Youth's Companion* gives this conversation.

"Do you know what happened to hundreds of young fellows in the militia at the time of the 'war game'?" asked the doctor. "It rained all the time. They made forced marches day and night, and couldn't stop long enough to eat comfortably. They slept outdoors in their clothes, and they were at it sixteen hours each day; but every young fellow I knew declared he never had such sport in his life. Why? Because they all recognized that the hardships were part of the game. They knew that was the kind of thing that they might expect when they went into the militia. They knew that a soldier might be called on to do anything—even give up his life on occasion.

"It's the same in life. We have no right to think that life is a kind of merry pastime. It's hard, a good part of the way; sometimes it's mighty hard. But whoever can catch the spirit of life and see how well worth while it all is—he can face the hardships without gloom and without fear. When the hard things come, he won't mope and complain about them; he'll be up and at them, enduring what must be endured, and conquering what can be conquered, and he'll get out of it all, a wholesome, sturdy enjoyment of life."

"Of course that's true," said Jack. "It's the way *every* man ought to think about it."

"It's the way every *man* does think about it," said the doctor slowly.

The Parable of the Clock. God always hears the cry of the righteous: sometimes he delivers them out of all their troubles; but sometimes he knows that it is best for them to have troubles to endure. This is the heavenly meaning told by the "Parable of the Clock", for a parable is an earthly story, or an earthly object, with a heavenly meaning. The Parable is told by the Rev. F. J. Rae.

The clock has a story to tell, and is always telling it, quietly, steadily, without haste and without rest. The face of the clock is our life. The hands are God's hands, passing over our life continually, day by day, without any pause. The short hand is the hand of Discipline. Slowly and surely it passes over our life. Not one of us, not even children, can escape it. Even children have their troubles, their disappointments, their sorrows, often as real and severe to them

as the sorrows of grown-up people are to them. Nor should we wish to escape this hand of God, because it always brings us blessing.

The long hand of the clock is the hand of Mercy. And you know that the long hand passes over the dial of the clock far oftener than the short hand. I think this also is true of what God does for us. The hand of his mercy brings us happiness and prosperity and kindness, and these things come to us far oftener than trouble. Happiness is far oftener with us than sorrow. Health is far oftener ours than illness. Food and plenty come to people far oftener than want and famine. The things that are hard come to every one of us, but not often. The things that gladden us and help us and make us healthy and strong come to us every day.

But there is one thing more about these hands. They both move together. They are both fastened to one pivot. They are both controlled by one power and move at the same time and never separately. Do you see the beautiful heavenly meaning of this? All that God does comes from his love. His hand of Discipline and his hand of Mercy are both moved by his heart of Love. And so it is the same heart that sends all our troubles and all our joys.

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

Your thorn in the flesh is—what? Whatever it be that disorders, annoys, grieves you, makes life look dark, and your heart dumbly ache, or wets your eyes with bitter tears—counselled Samuel Longfellow, brother of our poet—look at it steadily, look at it deeply, look at it in the thought of God and his purpose of good, and already the pain of it will begin to brighten.

My grace is sufficient for thee. Do you live as you would if you fully believed this? Are you a timid, discouraged, hopeless Christian? Are you a self-confident, self-trusting Christian? Or are you a strong, God-trusting Christian?

Our Prayer. For all the pleasant things of life, we thank thee, O God—for health and possessions and successes and friends we are humbly grateful to thee; but help us to praise thee also for the hardships of life—for toil and disappointments and sufferings and sorrows which testify to our kinship with Christ. May the hard things which come to each one of us be borne in thy strength, and may they ennoble our character, test our courage, prove our faith, enlarge our sympathies, and deepen our love.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Slander. See "The New Republic", April 24, 1915.
2. In praise of boasting. See Dr. Watkinson's "Moral Paradoxes of St. Paul", pp. 26-50.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. Give the course of Paul's last journey to Jerusalem from the time he left Miletus. 2. What do you know about Tyre? 3. What was the last thing that Paul did before sailing from Tyre? 4. What do you know about Cæsarea? 5. With whom did Paul stay at Cæsarea? 6. How many times on this voyage was Paul warned not to go to Jerusalem? 7. What reasons are given in Acts 20.22-24 for Paul's persistence in going to Jerusalem in spite of warnings? 8. How was he received at Jerusalem? 9. How was his orthodoxy suspected? 10. What charges would Paul have to pay for four men? (*Guide*, p. 352.) 11. What part of the temple enclosure is meant by "temple", verse 28, and what would defile the place in the eyes of the Jews? (*Guide*, p. 354.) 12. What was the warning given on a tablet placed on the inner boundary of the Court of the Gentiles? (*Guide*, p. 354.)

Questions to Think About. 1. What was the story that Paul told the brethren at Jerusalem? 2. How much truth was there in the charge against Paul, verse 21? 3. Were the brethren wise in the request they made of Paul? 4. Was Paul wise in yielding to the request of the brethren? 5. What scene at Ephesus is recalled by this lesson? 6. Should you readily believe evil reported about others? 7. How does unfounded slander arise? 8. How does it grow? 9. When had another mob in Jerusalem cried "Away with him!" (Lk. 23.13-25.)

Memory and Note-Book Work. Write Chapter XIII, Paul's Sorrows and Comforts.

THE ARREST OF PAUL

Golden Text

Thou shalt be a witness for him unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard. Acts 22.15

LESSON Acts 21.17-40: verses 27-40 printed
MEMORIZE verses 31-32

27 And when the seven days were almost completed, the Jews from Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the multitude and laid hands on him, 28 crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man that teacheth all men everywhere against the people, and the law, and this place; and moreover he brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath defiled this holy place. 29 For they had before seen with him in the city Trophimus the Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple. 30 And all the city was moved, and the people ran together; and they laid hold on Paul, and dragged him out of the temple: and straightway the doors were shut. 31 And as they were seeking to kill him, tidings came up to the chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in confusion. 32 And forthwith he took soldiers and centurions, and ran down upon them: and they, when they saw the chief captain and the soldiers, left off beating Paul. 33 Then the chief captain came near, and laid hold on him, and commanded him to be bound with two chains; and inquired who he was, and what he had done. 34 And some shouted one thing, some another, among the crowd: and when he could not know the certainty for the uproar, he commanded him to be brought into the castle. 35 And when he came upon the stairs, so it was that he was borne of the soldiers for the violence of the crowd; 36 for the multitude of the people followed after, crying out, Away with him.

37 And as Paul was about to be brought into the castle, he saith unto the chief captain, May I say something unto thee? And he said, Dost thou know Greek? 38 Art thou not then the Egyptian, who before these days stirred up to sedition and led out into the wilderness the four thousand men of the Assassins? 39 But Paul said, I am a Jew, of Tarsus, in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city: and I beseech thee, give me leave to speak unto the people. 40 And when he had given him leave, Paul, standing on the stairs, beckoned with the hand unto the people; and when there was made a great silence, he spake unto them in the Hebrew language, saying,

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

I. Paul's Reception and Report at Jerusalem, 17-19.
II. Told that his Orthodoxy is Suspected and Induced to Prove it by a Concession, 20-26.
III. Mobbed in the Temple and Rescued by the Chief Captain, 27-32.
IV. Arrested, but Given Permission to Address the People, 33-40.

17-26. ***James.*** The brother of Jesus.—*Thou seest how many thousands there are among the Jews of them that have believed.* These were the Judean Jews who were attending the Passover in great numbers.—*All zealous for the law.* They were less liberal-minded than the Jews of the dispersion.—*Telling them not to circumcise their children.* Recall the trouble which was settled by the Church Council, lesson IX of the Second Quarter.—*Do therefore this.* Conciliate them by this Jewish rite and allay their suspicions: become a Jew to the Jews that you may gain the Jews.—*Have a vow on them.* A kind of Nazarite vow; see Num. 6.—*Be at charges for them.* The expense of the sacrifice for the four men was considerable, consisting for each of a lamb for a burnt offering, a lamb for a sin-offering, a ram for a peace-offering, and also meal-offerings and drink-offerings, Num. 6.14, 15.

27. *When the seven days were almost completed.* The circumstances here are obscure, but the time was doubtless the last seven days of the prescribed "days of separation."—*The Jews from Asia.* It was Pentecost, and Jews from all over the world were in the city.—*The multitude.* They were all Jews, for only Jews were permitted within the Court of Israel where they were now.

28. *This is the man that teacheth...law.* This was the rumor that had come to all the Jews, as the brethren had informed Paul on his arrival, verse 21. Recall the accusations against Stephen, Acts 6.13, and against Jesus, Mark 14.58.—*He brought Greeks also into the temple.* By the *temple* here is meant the inner court, the Court of the Israelites, into which no Gentile might enter. With Paul were the men for whose vow of purification he was paying, verses 23 and 26, and his accusers jump to the conclusion that they are Greeks.

29. *Trophimus the Ephesian.* See Acts 20.4; 2 Tim. 4.12.

30. *And all the city was moved, and the people ran together.* "People are like sheep. If one sheep starts in a certain way, all the flock will follow."—*Dragged him out of the temple.* Out of the Court of Israel. They would not defile the temple precincts by killing him there.—*Straightway the doors were shut.* The *doors* were the gates between the Court of the Israelites and the Court of the Gentiles; they were shut by the temple guard to keep out the mob.

31. *Tidings came up.* Up to the Tower of Antonia.—*The chief captain. The military tribune,* RVm. Greek, *chiliarch.* He was Claudius Lysias, Acts 23.26. —*Band. Cohort,* RVm.

32. *Centurions.* Commanders of a century, consisting of fifty to a hundred men.—*Ran down upon them.* Down the stairs from the Tower of Antonia.

33. *Bound with two chains.* Like Peter, 12.6, to a soldier on either side.

34. *And some shouted one thing, some another, among the crowd.* Recall the scene at Ephesus, 19.32.—*Castle.* Literally, *barracks,* the tower where the soldiers were quartered.

35. *The stairs.* They led from the temple court to the tower.—*So it was.* It happened, because of the frenzied crowd.

36. *Crying out, Away with him.* Slay him. Compare the scene at Christ's trial, Lk. 23.13-25.

37. *Dost thou know Greek?* The chief captain asked the question in surprise at hearing his prisoner speak in cultured Greek.

38. *Art thou not then the Egyptian? The Egyptian* is twice mentioned by Josephus: in his "Jewish War" he says he had thirty thousand followers; and led a rabble out of Jerusalem, promising to show them that the walls would fall down at his command. A large portion of them were killed or captured by the Procurator Felix; in his "Antiquities" Josephus says fourteen thousand were slain.—*The Assassins.* They were the *Sicarii,* "men of the dagger", members of a secret society.

39-40. *A citizen of no mean city.* The coins of Tarsus had the inscription "Self-Governing Metropolis". Only a limited number of its inhabitants had the rights of citizens, hence when Paul says he was a citizen he proves that he had high standing there.—*Hebrew language.* Aramaic.—*Saying.* What Paul said we shall study next week.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

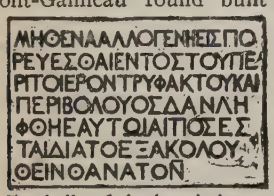
24. *Purify thyself.* In India at the present time a distinguished native who by certain necessary compliances with Western customs in a journey to Europe has violated the rules of his caste, is required to undergo strange ceremonies of purification on his return, in order that he may be restored. This was perhaps the nature of Paul's purification. It involved an admission that he had not done so in his journeys. *Christopher N. Johnston,* in *St. Paul and His Mission to the Roman Empire.*

27. *The Jews from Asia stirred up all the multitude.* The Jews at this period were in a most inflammable state of mind. The procuratorship of Cumanus marked the commencement of terrible disturbances. At the very first Passover at which he was present an event occurred which was a terrible omen of the future. Just as at this day the Turkish soldiers are always prepared to pour down from the house of the Turkish Government on the first occurrence of any discord between the Greek and Latin Churches, so it was the custom of the

Roman Commandant of the Tower of Antonia to post detachments of soldiers along the roof of the cloister which connected the fortress with the temple area —ready at any moment to rush down the stairs and plunge into the very midst of the crowded worshippers. What occurred on this occasion was singularly characteristic. While standing there at guard, one of the Roman soldiers, weary of having nothing to do, and disgusted with watching what he despised as the mummeries of these hateful Jews, expressed his contempt for them by a gesture of insult. Instantly the Jews were plunged into a paroxysm of fury. They cursed the new Procurator, and began to pelt the soldiers with stones. Fearing that the Antonia detachment would be too weak to cope with so savage an onslaught, Cumanus marched his entire forces around from the Prætorium. At the clash of their footsteps, and the gleam of their swords, the wretched, unarmed mass of pilgrims was struck with panic, and made a rush to escape. The gates of the temple were choked up, and a multitude, variously stated at ten and twenty thousand, was trampled and crushed to death. In A. D. 52 Felix became Procurator of Judea. *F. W. Farrar.*

28. *He brought Greeks into the temple.* Within the larger square forming the outer court of the Herodian temple, there was an oblong quadrangular space enclosed by strong walls. This was the so-called inner wall, or "the court" in the strict sense of the word. This court was approached by a flight of forty-five steps, and at the foot of this stair was a stone fence within which no Gentile was allowed to pass. Any Gentile who ventured to pass this boundary and set foot within the inner court was punished with death; and the Roman authorities so respected the scruples of the Jews in regard to this matter that they sanctioned the execution of this sentence even in those cases in which Roman citizens had been the offenders. To this fence notices were attached at certain distances from each other, with the prohibition and penalty for infringing inscribed on them in Greek and Latin. *Schürer,* in *The Jewish People in the Time of Christ.*

Here is a reproduction of an inscription on a slab which in 1871 M. Clermont-Ganneau found built into the walls of a small mosque in the Via Dolorosa. It came from Herod's Temple, and the eyes of Paul may often have gazed upon it. This is the translation: Let no Gentile enter inside of the barrier and the fence around the sanctuary. Any one trespassing will bring death upon himself as a penalty.



Facsimile of the inscription on a Warning Tablet now in the Museum at Constantinople

To-day no Jew is allowed to set foot on the temple area in Jerusalem.

28. *And hath defiled this holy place.* Eastern religious sects are today very jealous of the sanctity of their temples and holy places. Death would be the penalty meted out to any one not a Moslem who should venture to enter the holy place at Mecca. No Jewish or Christian feet shall defile the holy tombs of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob at Hebron, or of David at Jerusalem, declare the Moslems, who have appropriated them as their own. When the sects have been fighting one against the other the victor has taken great delight in entering and defiling the sanctuaries of the vanquished. Antiochus, Helidorus and Pompey had profaned the temple at Jerusalem, and the Samaritans had polluted it by scattering over it dead men's bones.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

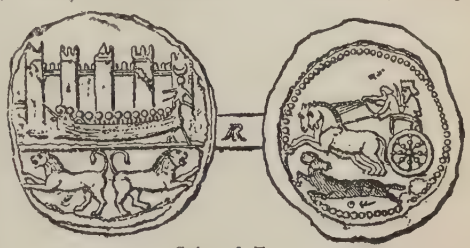
Review Questions. Where was the province of Asia? In what city of that province had Paul labored? Why were many of the Jews there hostile to him? What warning had Paul at Miletus about what he would have to suffer in Jerusalem? What question had been settled by the Council at Jerusalem, and how was it settled? Where had a mob shouted till all the city was in confusion? When had Paul been bound with chains? Of what city was Paul a native? Where was Tarsus? How many courts were there in the temple area at Jerusalem? In which one were none but Jews allowed?

From Miletus to Tyre. After Paul had parted from the Ephesian elders on the beach at Miletus, (our lesson two weeks ago) he entered the coasting ves-

sel in which he had come from Assos and continued his journey around the western shore of Asia Minor, stopping on successive nights at the islands of Cos and Rhodes and arriving on the third day at Patara. He was hastening to Jerusalem with the offerings of the Gentile Christians, and wished to reach there in time for the festival of Pentecost, therefore at Patara he embarked in a swifter sailing merchant-ship bound directly for Phœnicia. The island of Cyprus was passed on their left as they journeyed southeastward, and Tyre was speedily reached. There the ship's cargo was put off, and the seven days' stay gave Paul an opportunity to visit the Christians in that city. They were told by the Spirit of the dangers awaiting Paul in Jerusalem, and they urged him not to hazard his life, but he was not to be shaken from his purpose. When the time for departure came the little company of men, women and children came with him to the beach, where prayer was offered and farewells were said.

Coin of Rhodes

At Cæsarea. From Tyre the journey was continued to Ptolemais, a day being spent with the Christian community there, and then to Cæsarea. In the home of Philip, the evangelist at Cæsarea, several days were passed. His four daughters possessed the gift of prophecy, and doubtless warned Paul of "bonds and afflictions" ahead, and now the prophet Agabus, coming there from Judea, warned him in no uncertain words. Taking Paul's girdle, Agabus bound with it his own feet and hands, at the same time announcing that the Holy Spirit had said that in like manner the owner of the girdle should be bound at Jerusalem by the Jews and delivered into the hands of the Gentiles. Paul's traveling companions joined with the disciples of Cæsarea in beseeching him not to continue his journey to Jerusalem. "What do ye, weeping and breaking my heart?" exclaimed the great apostle, "I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." "The will of the Lord be done", then acknowledged they all.


Coin of Tyre

Paul's Reception at Jerusalem. Resolute in his purpose to accomplish his divinely given task, Paul went on to Jerusalem, where he was gladly welcomed by the brethren, and received in the home of Mnason, a native of Cyprus. The day after his arrival he met the authorities of the Church, the elders with James, the brother of Jesus, at their head. None of the twelve are mentioned; they were probably widely scattered on various missions. The money collected from the Gentile Christians was presented by the delegates, and Paul gave a full report of the work accomplished during his last missionary journey. Then the company glorified God and in their turn called Paul's attention to the large numbers of Jewish Christians in the city, all "zealous for the law", who had been told that he taught the Gentiles not to circumcise their children nor to follow the customs of Moses. These would hear of Paul's presence in Jerusalem and there would be trouble. To conciliate them the elders and James advised Paul to prove the falsity of the report by purifying himself in the temple and paying the charges for four others who could not shave their heads in token that they had fulfilled their vow till expensive offerings had been made. At the same time they ratified again the concessions made to the Gentile Christians at the time of the Council, Lesson VIII of second quarter. Their proposition involved no question of principle, and Paul consented to do as they asked. It was during his presence in the temple for this purpose that the tumult was stirred up which led to his arrest. The time was probably just before Pentecost, A. D. 56. See page 14 of this *Guide*.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

We are now back to the old, familiar places in Palestine, long since lost sight of in Luke's narrative—Phœnicia and Tyre and Ptolemais and Cæsarea and Jerusalem.

The scene of our lesson text is in the temple courts and on the stairs leading up to the Tower of Antonia. The Tower of Antonia was a fortress and a castle all in one, erected at the northeast corner of the temple area. It was an immense structure divided into splendid apartments. Josephus says that having everything necessary in itself, it seemed a city, while in magnificence it resembled a palace. At each corner there was a tower, the tallest being the one which overlooked the whole temple area. In this tower soldiers were always quartered, and when the Jews celebrated their great annual festivals an extra number of soldiers was always brought there to watch the people.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

A study of Paul's tact in addressing his hearers is well worth while, the way in which he dwells upon all the facts which would conciliate them, as well as the way in which he avoids words that would offend them. He addresses them as "brethren and fathers"—those fanatics who had almost compassed his death. He speaks to them in their familiar Aramaic dialect. He has by no means lost his pride in being a Greek citizen from Tarsus, "no mean city", but he tells them not of this, but of his being by descent a member of the Jewish race, educated by Gamaliel, their great rabbi. He was filled with zeal for God, "even as ye are this day": in such magnanimous way he speaks of their fanatical frenzy that would put him to death as "zeal for God". He speaks of the Christians as those of "this Way", and thus avoids irritating them by using the term they hated. Luke in telling about the conversion of Saul calls Ananias merely "a disciple" (Acts 9.10), but Paul calls him "a devout man according to the law, well reported of by all the Jews that dwell there". He mentions the fact that the latter told him "the God of our fathers hath appointed thee to know his will". He speaks of Jesus as "the Righteous One", which was the Jewish conception of the Messiah. And he mentions the temple, the holy place of the Jews, as the place where his commission was given him.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Where did we leave Paul two weeks ago? Trace on the map his course from Miletus to Tyre. What happened at Tyre? Where was Paul's next stopping place? What happened at Cæsarea? During the Boer War when the Boers were encamped against the city of Ladysmith, the English officer in command of the beseiged city learned that a soldier was going about among those who were valiantly defending the city, and telling them that they could never hold out till help arrived. The soldier was sentenced to a year's imprisonment for being "a discourager". If all "discouragers" could be restrained from plying their words, what a world of difference it would make! To his discouragers at Tyre Paul said, "What do ye, weeping and breaking my heart?" What caused them finally to desist? Where then did Paul go? How was he received?

For Older Pupils. What happened on Paul's journey from Miletus to Jerusalem? How was he received at Jerusalem? What did he tell the brethren? What did the brethren tell him? How did they ask him to prove his orthodoxy? It was in this city of Jerusalem that we were first introduced to this great hero whose work and fortunes we have long been following. What was the occasion? There are many points of resemblance between that scene and this of our text today. Who were the Jews who stirred up the people in the temple against him? What was their false charge? Jews from Asia were among those who disputed with Stephen and had him falsely accused. What was their charge? Whence did the frenzied mob drag Stephen and what was Paul's part in the tragedy? What is Paul's part in this scene twenty years later which almost proved a tragedy?

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Steadfastness of Purpose

Paul's Persistence. The solicitous spirit of Paul's companions at Cæsarea which made them care more for his safety and freedom from trouble than for his mission to Jerusalem is common; somewhat rare is the inflexible determination of Paul to follow the path of duty at all hazards and in spite of all entreaties. Paul was bringing gifts from the Gentile Christians to the poor Christian Jews, he knew how great the effect of these gifts of love would be in uniting harmoniously the two branches of the church, he was convinced that he was going on a divinely sent mission, the Spirit who had told him of the bonds and afflictions awaiting him had also told him to go on, and that the naming of the perils had been to prepare him to meet them, to strengthen his courage,—for true courage is but increased by the presence of perils. Paul's persistency of purpose, in spite of loving entreaties and certainty of danger, is magnificent. Easy it is to make a resolve and carry it out at the time of the making, but only a moral hero marches steadily onward to his appointed goal, "steadfast, immovable", after weeks and months of every kind of opposition.

What One Man accomplished by Persistency of Purpose. There was a man called Benjamin Waugh, who was enjoying the delights of some secluded ministry, all the enjoyment that comes to a studious life. He heard the wail of a little child, and he left his studies and his books, went out into the night, and encountered the tempest, antagonisms on every side. He only wanted to protect the ill-used child against the heavy, brutal hand of oppression, but he was opposed and antagonized, confronted on every side by opposition. The police, especially the chief constables of the county, ranged themselves in opposition to him. He had to fight and fight and fight: and now to-day we have a great and popular society for the protection of ill-used little children, which must be traced to the majestic outgoing of a man who said: "I will despise ease, leisure, pleasure, treasure; I choose to be one with the ill-used children rather than to enjoy the pleasures of luxurious seclusion, even for a season". *Dr. John Henry Jowett.*

Pressing toward the Goal. The business of a river is to flow. Its banks may be beautiful or unpleasant; its current strong or sluggish; its skies blue or clouded; its waters may mirror flowers in spring and ferns in summer; may float the dead leaves of fall, or be hemmed in and pressed by the ice in winter—it must flow on.

A noisy brook in its youth, a noble river at last, so deep that men say, "There go the ships", majestically entering the ocean; but from its birth to its bourne its business is to flow. Here eddies may seem to be turning it back, there the current may be checked by a resisting arm of land, but the central stream moves steadily onward as though led by the hand of destiny.

Is not this steadfastness to mark, to make, the character of your lives? Is it not God's will that we should press steadily on to our goal in obedience to him, in channels of his choosing, whether in sunshine or shadow, in the cheer of spring or in the chill of winter, neither detained by pleasure nor deterred by pain? *Maltbie D. Babcock.*

II They Supposed

Cruel Suppositions. The Jews from Asia who fiercely hated Paul had seen him going about the streets of Jerusalem with Trophimus of Ephesus, and when later they saw him in the temple court with the Nazirites, they at once jumped to the conclusion that the latter, too, were Gentiles, or "they supposed" that one of them was Trophimus himself, as the text reads. There are a great many people in the world at the present day who are ready to jump at conclusions. A suspicion is aroused, a supposition is formulated, a certainty is stated. Paul's enemies see him with Trophimus on the streets of Jerusalem and they declare, "He brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath defiled this holy place".

Thou shalt not bear false witness. Is it not true that a very large part of the slanders in circulation have some supposition as their basis? And is not to start a slander on a mere supposition one of the most despicable things one

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can do? "The third tongue, let it be accursed, for it hath laid low many corpses" is a Syriac saying. The "third tongue" is the slanderous tongue, called thus because it kills three—the slanderer, the listener, and the victim. An essayist defines gossip as "the putting of two and two together and making five of them"; then is slander the putting of two and two together and making five hundred of them.

Ignorant Suppositions. A continuous stream of persons passed through the Art Gallery, and a woman sitting there listened with no small amusement to the comments made upon a certain small portrait by a distinguished American artist. The picture was of a young girl, sitting bolt up-right on a straight-backed chair, a small, hard pillow placed stiffly between her back and the chair. The child had on a little blue sack and looked out of the canvas with bright, wistful eyes.

"883. Sargent. Of course. How exactly like him with his continual mannerisms. To pose a poor child in that awkward and difficult position. No girl would ever sit so of her own accord." Such were the frequent expressions of the many. Finally an elderly woman, beautifully dressed, her face alive with intelligence, came in search of a particular picture. Stopping before the small head she examined it with manifest satisfaction, and turned to her companion with moist eyes.

"You know this dear child has a great affliction, a hardening of the spine, so that her back is stiff and this is her habitual posture. She has a lovely character, as one may see shining from these eyes, and Sargent has translated it to the life. Without the pose he has given her, however, something would have seemed lacking. As it is, it is perfect."

The woman on the bench grew thoughtful. Is it always so, she asked herself, that everything has its explanation? that what we condemn as exaggerated or false is simply something we do not yet understand? and that our hasty conclusions merely stamp us as ignorant? *Lucy Elliot Keeler.*

A Self-Revealing Supposition. An indignant-faced woman rushed into the lobby of a fashionable New York Hotel some fifty years ago and demanded that her room be changed at once. The clerk politely told her there was no other room available and asked what was amiss: he would have it attended to at once: surely there could be nothing important that was wrong. "Important! Wrong!" echoed the woman, indignantly. "Well, now, I should just say there was. I'd have you to know I'm fond of music, and I have a sensitive ear, and I'm staying here on purpose to go to the opera; and if you think, after hearing Patti at night, I'm going to put up with a squealing amateur on the other side of a thin partition next morning—well, you don't know *me!*"

"I'm sorry Madame Patti has annoyed you", said the clerk suavely. "She is your next-door neighbor."

III Patriotism

Paul's Patriotism. Paul was proud of being a citizen of Tarsus. It was "no mean city". It had a warm place in his heart. Sir William M. Ramsay, writing in "Pauline and Other Studies", reminds us that we must bear in mind that the feeling of an ancient citizen for his own city was much stronger than that which is in modern times entertained usually toward one's native town. "All the feeling of patriotism which now binds us to our country irrespective of the town to which we belong, was in ancient times directed toward one's city. 'Fatherland' denoted one's city, and not one's country. Both *Patria* in Latin and *Patris* in Greek, were applied to the city of one's home. It was only to a small degree, and among the most educated Greeks, that Hellas, as a country, was an idea of power. The educated native of a Cilician city like Tarsus regarded the country Cilicia as implying rudeness and barbarism, and prided himself on being a Hellene rather than a Cilician; but Hellas to him meant a certain standard and ideal of culture and municipal freedom. He was a 'Tarsian,' but Tarsus was and had long been a Hellenic city, and the Greek-speaking Tarsians were either Hellenes or Jews, but not 'Cilicians' in the sense of nationality, only 'Cilicians' as members of the province. Moreover, citizenship implied much more in ancient times than it means now. We can now migrate to a new city, and almost immediately acquire citizenship there, losing it in our former home. But in ancient days the Tarsian who migrated to an-

other city continued to rank as a Tarsian, and Tarsus was still his Fatherland, while in his new home he was merely a resident alien. His descendants, too, continued to be mere resident aliens. Occasionally, and as a special compliment, a resident alien was granted the citizenship with his descendants, but a special enactment was needed in each individual case and family. The city that was his Fatherland and his home mattered much to Paul."

Training in Citizenship. The Junior Civic League sets the boy at work first in his own garden. There he learns by experience something about trees and plants, and insect pests and birds. He finds out what makes a good path; he perceives that the débris and the stagnant puddles that spoil the fair face of his little domain are breeding places for flies and mosquitoes. It is easy then to interest him in the preservation of trees and plants, of birds and animals; the extermination of flies and mosquitoes; road-making. It is easy to lead him on from pride in his garden to pride in his street, his neighborhood, his town. Enrolled with other enthusiasts, he wages war on everything that militates against civic cleanliness, order and beauty. He has mastered the primer of good citizenship.

By the time these boys reach their last year in the high school, they are probably learning something about the government and the economic conditions under which they live. At the stage when they are receiving this information in "civics", it will be most beneficial to them and to the community if some group of responsible men will let them share in work that the town needs. At Winston-Salem, in North Carolina, the board of trade has recently organized the boys into a sort of junior association, and has employed them in gathering statistics for an industrial survey of the town. It is not hard to guess what effect this carefully supervised, enlightening and important work has had on the boys. *Youth's Companion.*

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

Let us be careful how we judge others. If we find that we are given to drawing hasty conclusions on insufficient evidence in regard to the actions or motives of others, let us put a watch upon ourselves at this danger point. Let us be careful how we accuse others. A good rule for the street corner as well as for the court room, says the *Youth's Companion,* is to make no accusation which you cannot prove, and to believe no accusation which is not proved to you.

Whatever our city or village may be, we should take pride in it, and show it by laboring for its improvement and uplift.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Compromise. The motive of the elders of Jerusalem in the request made of Paul and his motive in yielding to them. See "Compromise" by John Morley.

2. How ready should one be in these days to accuse another of not being orthodox?

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. What was the name of the chief captain? (Acts 23.26.) 2. Of what was Paul's speech a defence? (Acts 21.21, 24.) 3. Give the substance of his whole speech. 4. When was Jesus scourged? (Mt. 27.26.) 5. Was every inhabitant of the Roman Empire a Roman citizen? (*Guide,* ¶ 2, p. 356.) 6. What did Lysias mean by saying "With a great sum obtained I this citizenship"? (*Guide,* p. 361.) 7. How did Paul obtain his Roman citizenship? (*Guide,* p. 361.) 8. On your map continue Paul's course to Jerusalem.

Questions to Think About. 1. What purpose had Paul in addressing the Jews? (*Guide,* p. 362.) 2. What was the argument of Paul's speech? (*Guide,* 362.) 3. How far in his speech did the Jews listen willingly? 4. What were the words which enraged them? 5. Why did Paul in his trance speak the words of verses 19 and 20? (*Guide,* p. 360.) 6. What did the actions recorded in verse 23 indicate? 7. Why did the chief captain not know what Paul had said which enraged the Jews? 8. How was a man "examined by scourging"? 9. Of what was the Roman scourge made?

Note-Book Work. Write Chapter XIV, Paul's Arrest.

A PRISONER IN THE CASTLE

Golden Text

He is my refuge and my fortresss;
My God, in whom I trust. Psalm 91.2

LESSON Acts 22: verses 17-29 printed MEMORIZE verses 27-29

17 And it came to pass, that, when I had returned to Jerusalem, and while I prayed in the temple, I fell into a trance, 18 and saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem; because they will not receive of thee testimony concerning me. 19 And I said, Lord, they themselves know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee: 20 and when the blood of Stephen thy witness was shed, I also was standing by, and consenting, and keeping the garments of them that slew him. 21 And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee forth far hence unto the Gentiles.

22 And they gave him audience unto this word; and they lifted up their voice, and said, Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live. 23 And as they cried out, and threw off their garments, and cast dust into the air, 24 the chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle, bidding that he should be examined by scourging, that he might know for what cause they so shouted against him. 25 And when they had tied him up with the thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned? 26 And when the centurion heard it, he went to the chief captain and told him, saying, What art thou about to do? for this man is a Roman. 27 And the chief captain came and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? And he said, Yea. 28 And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this citizenship. And Paul said, But I am *a Roman* born. 29 They then that were about to examine him straightway departed from him: and the chief captain also was afraid when he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

I. Paul's Defense to the Jews, 1-21.
  1. He was an Intense Jew, and had been a Persecutor of Christians, 1-5.
  2. His Conversion and his Instruction from Ananias, a Devout Jew, 6-16.
  3. His Trance and Commission, 17-21.
II. The Jews Clamor for his Death, 22, 23.
III. Paul's Appeal to his Roman citizenship, 24, 25.

17. *While I prayed in the temple.* That his world-wide commission was given him while worshipping in the temple was skilfully told to his Jewish hearers.—*I fell into a trance.* Whether this trance occurred on his first visit to Jerusalem after his commission, or, as Ramsay thinks, at the visit mentioned in Acts 11.30 and 12.25, we can not tell. A trance is mentioned in 2 Cor. 12.2, but for chronological reasons it could not have been this one.

18. *And saw him.* No name is given, but Paul must have meant Christ.

19-20. Paul's answer may be taken as an excuse for the Christian Jews of Jerusalem, a reason why they would not receive from him, their former persecutor, testimony concerning Christ. More probably, however, it was a reason why he thought the non-Christian Jews would listen to him; they knew what he had been, and they must realize the reality of a power that could change him into a Christian. Paul tells this to his audience to show them that it had been his wish to preach to the Jews, his own people.

21. *I will send thee forth far hence unto the Gentiles.* These words made Paul the apostle to the Gentiles.

22. *They gave him audience unto this word.* They had held themselves in check during Paul's speech in self-defence, but when he declared his mission to the Gentiles they would hear no more, for this hated word, Gentiles, always aroused their uncontrolled anger.

23. *Threw off their garments.* They may have flung off their loose outer robe and probably trampled it in the dust, or they may have merely shaken their robes—either method would be the oriental way of expressing rage.—*Cast dust into the air.* Compare 2 Sam. 16.13; Job 2.12; Rev. 18.19.

24. *Chief captain.* Or tribune. His name was Claudius Lysias, Acts 23.26. —*The castle.* The fortress of Antonia.—*Bidding that he should be examined by scourging.* The chief captain's method of inquiring into the cause of the hubbub is to order his prisoner scourged until he acknowledges what he has done or said to excite the mob. See Light from Oriental Life.—*That he might know for what cause they so shouted against him.* Lysias had not understood Paul's speech nor the shouts of the rabble, for being a Roman he did not understand Hebrew.

25. *When they had tied him up with thongs.* While he was being bound by leather thongs to a post where he was to be scourged.—*Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?* Recall Paul's experience at Philippi, Acts 16.37. "The Valerian law exempted a Roman citizen from stripes and tortures until an appeal to the people was decided; the Porcian law absolutely forbade the infliction of stripes upon a Roman." The magistrates of Philippi, who had ordered the beating of Paul, were liable to indictment for treason and punishment by death.

26. *What art thou about to do?* He was about to have Paul scourged.—*For this man is a Roman.* The centurion had no doubts about Paul's veracity; no one would make a false claim of this sort, for its falseness could be easily ascertained and the punishment would be death.

27. *Tell me, art thou a Roman?* The chief captain is so surprised that he wants to understand how such a poor, bedraggled Jew had this great right and honor, as his next remark shows.

28. *With a great sum obtained I this citizenship.* "During the Empire imperial parasites and freedmen were sometimes allowed to sell the title of citizenship, as James IV sold patents for baronetcies, or as at a later period, posts under Government and commissions in the army were bought and sold" (*Lindsay*). The remark shows a vague doubt in the captain's mind: if he had to pay so large a sum, how could this man before him have had money enough to buy it? There were three classes among the people of the Roman Empire: *Cives,* or citizens, *Latini,* or Latins, and *Peregrini,* or foreigners. The citizens had full political rights; the Latins had partial political rights, and the foreigners had none.—*But I am a Roman born.* Lysias must have felt the quiet superiority implied by that *But.* Paul was not a Roman citizen merely because a native of Tarsus, for the chief captain knew this latter fact when he ordered him scourged, Acts 21.39. It has been suggested that he may have been the son of a manumitted slave. His father may have been taken captive in war, and reduced to slavery, as many Jewish captives were, and then for some special service, set free. He would then have had the rights of a Roman citizen, and his sons would inherit that citizenship.

29. *They that were about to examine him.* The lictors who were on the point of torturing him till he confessed, verse 24.—*Because he had bound him.* Lysias was not in as great danger as the magistrates at Philippi, for Paul had not been scourged, but to have bound a Roman citizen was illegal.

30. Paul was loosed from his thongs, but he was not freed, he was chained to a soldier.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAI LIFE

23. *They cried out, and threw off their garments, and cast dust into the air.* "When peasants in Persia have a grievance, and wish the governor to redress it, they assemble in hundreds near the gate of his house, and set up horrid yells, toss their garments, throw dust in the air, and call out their demands."

25. *A man that is a Roman.* From a letter written by Justin Martyr, 177 A. D. to "the Brethren throughout Asia and Phrygia", I cull these words concerning Attalus. The whole wrath of the populace was aroused exceedingly against Attalus, a native of Pergamos, where he had always been a pillar and foundation. He was led to the amphitheatre to be exposed to the wild beasts, and to give to the heathen public a spectacle of cruelty. He entered the contest readily on account of a good conscience and his genuine practice in Christian discipline, and he had always been a witness for the truth among us. He was led around the amphitheatre, a tablet being carried before him on which was written in the Latin language, "This is Attalus, the Christian", and the people were filled with indignation against him. But when the governor learned that he was a Roman, he commanded him to be taken back with the rest of those who were in prison, concerning whom he had written to Cæsar, and whose answer he was awaiting.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. What had Paul been doing before he became a Christian? What was his part in the stoning of Stephen? Why did he start for Damascus? Tell the story of his conversion. When did Peter fall into a trance and what did he then learn? What words of Stephen had especially incensed his persecutors? When had Paul been scourged? What question did he then ask which frightened the authorities? What did the latter do? What was the law in regard to the scourging of a Roman?

Paul Receives Permission from Lysias to Address the Mob of Jews. Last week we left Paul standing on the stairway leading up from the temple court to the Tower of Antonia. He was chained to two soldiers. By his side stood Claudius Lysias, the chief Captain, who had just given him permission to address the infuriated mob below them. "The request was a bold one", observes Conybeare and Howson; "and we are almost surprised that Lysias should have granted it: but there seems to have been something in Paul's aspect and manner which from the first gained an influence over the mind of the Roman officer; and his consent was not refused". Turning to the crowd Paul addressed them in Hebrew, the Aramaic dialect.

The Purpose of Paul's Speech. What could he have hoped to accomplish by addressing that angry crowd below him? First of all he would defend himself from the charge of some of them that he was an enemy of the people, of the law, and of the temple. This he did by telling them that he was an Israelite, and though born in Tarsus of Cilicia, he had been educated in Jerusalem, at the feet of their famous rabbi Gamaliel, and he had been most zealous in persecuting the Christians, had even started for Damascus with letters from the Sanhedrin allowing him to seize and bring back in chains all the Christians he could find. Many of those to whom he was speaking must have known and recalled these facts. Next, he wished to defend his Christian faith, and he told them about his wonderful conversion, of his interview with Ananias and the restoration of his sight, of his return to Jerusalem and baptism. If the Crucified Jesus had appeared to him in such power, then he must be the Messiah whom he as Pharisee had so longed to see, and if the Risen Jesus is really the Messiah, then Paul must, as a righteous Israelite, yield him willing obedience and witness for him. And yet another aim Paul had, the aim of all his preaching; he would win them over to a favorable opinion of this Jesus who could change in a moment a bigoted Pharisee into an active Christian. And finally, he justifies his work among the Gentiles as the fulfilling of the express command of his Lord.

The Place. See the last lesson.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Have the members of your class enrolled themselves as followers of the Christ? Have they asked the question for themselves, "What shall I do, Lord"? Have you led them to ask and answer that question? You should offer the vow of service to every one and make it very plain that if he is not eager to do something for the advancement of the kingdom there is something lacking in his discipleship. As Dr. A. F. Schauffler states it: One great source of the strength

of the Salvation Army in these days is that they make every convert a worker. Though some of them make mistakes, it is a far better way than that of many churches, which shut up the mouth of the convert for so long that he presently forgets how to open it at all in things that are religious. Let the teacher teach that as soon as we believe that we have given our hearts to the Master, we ought at once to begin to do something for him.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. By questions recall last week's lesson.

For Older Pupils. Paul's defence as a whole. Dr. Thomas M. Lindsay says of it: "This defence is no intellectual defence of Christianity. It is a simple statement of personal experience, in which the speaker dwells on all the many things which gave him community of life and feeling with those he was addressing. He was one of them, their brother, his life, and thoughts, and deeds the very counterpart of theirs, even their murderous frenzy had once seized him; but something, a miraculous power, had crossed his path and changed his life. 'Brethren and fathers, after this what could I do, what could I have been, what could you in my place have done or been, but what I have done and am?' That was his plea. He was a Jew of the Dispersion, like hundreds among his audience; he belonged to Jerusalem, like hundreds more, for from childhood he had lived and studied there; old fellow-students perhaps were in the crowd. His master was Rabbi Gamaliel, dead only five years before, of whom scribes in the audience had said when he died, 'The glory of the Law has ceased'; he had been instructed according to the strict manner of the Law of our fathers, being a zealot for God, as they were this day. He had done as they were doing, and had gone farther than they had yet gone. He had persecuted Christians to the death, bound them and imprisoned them. The high priest, the Sanhedrin and Senate, could testify, for it was in their official records, that he had had their commission to their brethren to persecute in Damascus, and bring thence to Jerusalem for punishment by imprisonment, by scourging, brutal violence, death by stoning, all Christians he could find. He was one of themselves in birth, upbringing, zeal, frenzy, when suddenly—on Damascus road, the Shekinah, or cloud of God's presence, appeared with the noonday light as its darker background, and he saw and heard in the midst of it, in Jehovah's place, Jesus of Nazareth whom he was persecuting. He had been instructed in the faith of Christ, not by a Gentile, but by Ananias, a man who kept the Law so thoroughly that the Jews of Damascus could not but think well of him, and this devout Jew had been the messenger of the God of their fathers to him that he must preach Christ. He had come to Jerusalem, and after unsuccessful service he had gone like a devout Jew to the temple, had come to this very place to pray for guidance, and had got it in one of those courts; and there it was, in the temple from Jehovah, that he had received the command to go to the Gentiles. What else could he, a devout Jew, have done but what he had done?"

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I What Shall I Do, Lord?

Paul's Query. On the way to Damascus Paul was convinced that this Jesus whom he was persecuting was the Christ, the Son of God, the Savior of the world. As soon as he made this discovery, he was a changed man. "What shall I do, Lord?" was his first question. It was the constant question of his life thereafter. To know what his Lord and Master would have him do was the desire of his heart. He was the bond-servant of Christ; to him to live was Christ. "Like other Christian workers, Paul sometimes came into places of perplexity", observes Dr. J. Stuart Holden. "But there was always one way out from the maze of circumstances and seemingly conflicting duties. It was the way of the will of his Lord. Paul learned what we have all to learn, that God has only one thing at a time, not ten, for his people to do. We may eliminate nine. There is only one way, one path where he would have my feet set at one moment. What wilt *thou, Lord?*"

This is the first Natural Question of the Renewed Soul. It is not only

the natural question, but it is the necessary question. The man who has really found what Christ has done for him must ask, What can I do for Christ? Doing is a necessity to living and to growing. Doing tests, confirms, and builds character. "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" *Thomas S. Hastings,* in *Union Seminary Addresses.*

I'll Go to Work. No one can study the work of the Society of Christian Endeavor, the Epworth League, The King's Daughters and King's Sons, the Young Men's Christian Association and the Student Volunteers, without feeling how direct and straightforward it is. It seems as if the question asked by the boys and girls of this practical age is, "What is the purpose of religion?" "Right relations with the Creator", is the usual answer. "How shall I begin?" "Why, by getting into right relations with the people about you, and by helping them." "All right, I'll go to work."

The young man and the young woman do go to work. They not only attend church and Sunday-school, they take part. They visit the sick, help the poor, look after one another's comfort and happiness and welfare in Christian love and kindliness. And by and by, when they are ripe for it, they are drawn naturally into the larger and more mature life of the church and into the more important religious and philanthropic work of the community.

One great secret of the enormous power of these young people's societies is the simplicity and reasonableness of their work. The conversion of Paul was instant and complete, but it is worthy of notice that The Twelve were following the Master before they knew what Christianity meant. *Youth's Companion.*

Four Sorts of Workers. There are four kinds of people in every church, says a missionary secretary. The first, like a truck off the rails, are of no use at all until they get put on the line. The second are like a truck which stands stock-still on the line, but will go if it is pushed. The third are like a good engine, going full speed ahead, but alone. The fourth are like an engine going at full speed, but pulling trucks along with it.

To which class do you belong? *East and West.*

The Wish of David Brainerd. Oh, that I might be a flaming fire in the service of my God! Here I am, Lord, send me; send me to the ends of the earth; send me to the rough and savage pagan, to the wilderness; send me from all that is called earthly comfort; send me even to death itself if it be but in thy service and to promote thy kingdom.

One who Served her Lord. Bishop Woodcock of Kentucky has told a touching story about a little heroine whom he knew. She was left motherless at the age of eight. Her father was poor, and there were four children younger than she. She tried to care for them all and for the home. To do it all, she had to be up very early in the morning and to work very late at night. No wonder that at the age of thirteen her strength was all exhausted. As she lay dying a neighbor talked with her. The little face was troubled. "It isn't that I'm afraid to die", she said, "for I am not. But I'm so ashamed." "Ashamed of what?" the neighbor asked in surprise. "Why, it's this way", she explained. "You know how it's been with us since mama died. I've been so busy, I've never done anything for Jesus, and when I get to heaven and meet him, I shall be so ashamed! Oh, what can I tell him?" With difficulty the neighbor kept back her sobs. Taking the little calloused, work-scarred hands in her own, she answered: "I wouldn't tell him anything, dear. Just show him your hands".

II Sharing Religious Privileges

Why the Jews Hated Paul, the Apostle to the Gentiles. The burst of fury, expressed in gestures which anybody who has ever seen two Easterns quarreling can understand, looks fitter for a madhouse than an audience of men in their senses. They yelled and tore their garments (and their beards, no doubt), and clutched handfuls of dust and tossed it in the air, like Shimei cursing David. What a picture of frenzied hate! And what was it all for? Because Gentiles were to be allowed to share in Israel's privileges. And what were the privileges which they thus jealously monopolised? The favor and protection of the God who, as their own prophets had taught them, was the

God of the whole earth, and revealed to Israel that Israel might reveal him to the world.

The less they entered into the true possession of their heritage, the more savagely they resented sharing it with the nations. The more their prerogative became a mere outward thing, the more they snarled at any one who proposed to participate in it. To seek to keep religious blessings to one's self is a conclusive proof that they are not really possessed. If we have them we shall long to impart them. Formal religionists always dislike missionary enterprise. *Dr. Alexander Maclaren,* in *The Acts of the Apostles.*

What a Church Imbued with Paul's Spirit Could Do. Let us suppose a church somewhere whose supreme desire is to help the world in general and their own community in particular. They are striving daily to remove every moral and physical evil; trying to give every child who comes into the world the best possible chance; longing and working and praying and spending themselves and their substance to save men from sin and ignorance and suffering. Let us suppose the whole church is co-operating to this end. What a transformation such a church would work in any community! How it would grow! Yet such a church ought not to be in the least degree peculiar. This is simply the picture of a church whose membership is imbued with the social idea of Jesus, and has taken seriously his social laws of service, sacrifice, and love: and this picture ought to be the likeness of every Christian church in every community. If it were, how many hours would it be before the kingdom would come with blessed fullness? *Dr. Josiah Strong,* in *The Next Great Awakening.*

Other Religionists Need our Religion. To the man whom Christ has fully and truly saved by the grace of his Cross and his Spirit, there is simply an infinite difference between life in Christ and life without Christ here and now; and as life beyond is but the harvest of what is sown in this life, there will continue to be an infinite difference. Contrast the physical, social, moral, and spiritual condition of the peoples who have received the Gospel of Christ with that of those who as yet know it not, and then dare to say that even as regards this earthly life it does not matter whether the Gospel is preached or not!

It may be objected, however, to this line of argument that in Christendom there is abounding vice, crime, and violence. But the answer to this objection is obvious. It is not because of, but in spite of, the Gospel of the grace of God that Christendom is so defective. Nations bearing the Christian name are not truly and fully Christian. We must not blame other religions for all the moral evils which prevail in the peoples by whom they are professed. But it may be shown that there are moral evils directly resulting from the beliefs and rites of some of these religions, as impurity and cruelty in Hinduism, or polygamy and slavery in Islam; that there are other moral evils which are not condemned, as the exposure of girls in China; and that all these other faiths are proving their impotence to inspire and sustain the best moral life, such as the Christian faith alone is able to produce as the fruit of the Spirit. *Condensed* from *The Missionary Obligation,* by *Alfred E. Garvie.*

The Permanent Motive for Missionary Work. Let us not forget the meanness, the misery and evilness, of human society, where the gospel does not enter and pervade it. Let us not forget the recoverableness to God of every person and every people, if the divine energies are rightly used. Let us not forget that the gospel of Christ is to be the power to lift mankind, and glorify God, on all the continents, in all the earth. The passion of love for Christ, stimulated by everything that we read or hear, quickened by the spirit in our hearts, is the power that is to loosen amassed wealth and make it fluent, that is to vitalize dead wealth and make it active, that is to enter into every languid heart and inspire it for service. *Richard S. Storrs,* in *The World's Great Sermons.*

All are Brothers. At Mr. F. B. Meyer's first meeting in his church for working men he said to them, "Men, we won't call each other brethren, but we will call each other *brother!*" The next morning a scavenger on his cart shouted to Mr. Meyer on the sidewalk, "Good morning, Brother Meyer". "Good morning, my brother", Mr. Meyer replied. Then the scavenger left his cart and approaching Mr. Meyer saluted him respectfully. Mr. Meyer offered to shake hands, but the man drew back saying, "My hand is not fit for the likes of you to take". "O, but there's plenty of soap and water at Christ Church; give me

your hand." "I say, fellows", said the scavenger later in the day to some of his comrades, "look at that hand. The new pastor at Christ Church has shaken hands with it." "Well," they said, "if he has done that, he'll do".

III A Proud Claim

I Am a Roman. The Jew's rejection of Paul led to his appeal to Rome. "The Jews cast him out of their citizenship or synagogue; and in answer the apostle claimed his other citizenship. So afterwards, when the rulers of his people condemned him, he was constrained to make the final appeal to Cæsar. Henceforth, however much against his will, Paul is to the Jews no more a Jew, but a Roman. This is no doubt the significance of the present incident. The claim to the Roman citizenship is the first step in the separation; though why it was made at this particular moment is not obvious. For Paul made it deliberately, having allowed himself first to be tied up. It was not that he shrank from pain: he was beaten at Philippi before he declared his citizenship. Probably he saw that the appeal to Roman justice had become inevitable, and to undergo needless suffering is not a Christian principle, while the illegality to which he had already been subjected afforded him some hold over Lysias and protection against arbitrary treatment at his hands".

The Roman law, while caring little for humanity in general, was very careful about the rights of Roman citizens. It was not until 212 A. D. that all the inhabitants of the Roman Empire were given the citizenship. In New Testament times those who held the honor formed the aristocracy of each city. Roman historians give instances of cities whose charters were taken away because of indignities done to Roman citizens. Tully in an oration against Verres exclaims, "O liberty! I love thy charming name; and these our Porcial and Sempronian laws, how admirable! It is a crime to bind a Roman citizen, but an unpardonable one to beat him."

I Am an American. From time to time the lord mayor and dignitaries of London assemble to honor some noble citizen. Coming together in the mansion-house, with gorgeous ceremonies they present to the man the freedom of the city. With glorious pageantry, London conferred this honor upon Lord Curzon recently, as it did some years ago upon Livingstone, the hero and savior of Africa; upon Richard Cobden with his Free Corn laws, and upon Lord Lawrence, the benefactor of India.

The beautiful ceremony culminates when the lord mayor presents to the hero a golden key, with which he can unlock every gate and enter every treasure house of civic honor. And then they write, as it were, the name of the city upon the brow of the man whom they delight to honor, while he in turn swears to protect the city and its citizens with his genius, his gold, his influence and his sacred honor.

In the ancient towns the citizen achieved the freedom of his city by some valiant deed. But here, in American cities, all are free born. Not one honor, not one privilege, but is common to each patriot. It is as if the fathers and founders of the republic who have long passed into that Westminster Abbey of God where none but the great do sleep, should return to bow low above each American youth and whisper, "In this hour I write upon thy forehead the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God". *Dr. Newell Dwight Hillis,* in *The Contagion of Character.*

The Ideal Americanism. When we remember what Emerson said, "America is another name for opportunity; our whole history appears like a last evidence of Providence in behalf of the human race", there is something almost appalling in the tremendous sweep of our population, the enormous increase of our wealth, the complexity and number of the problems thrust upon us and the unique position our nation occupies, that publishes its success or proclaims its failure among all the nations.

In a certain profound sense, all the world problems are to be settled here. When an English statesman was discussing the question of co-operation he took occasion to say that the problems of labor and capital, the problems of poverty and pauperism, the problems of government and great cities, were all problems to be settled, not in Europe, but in America. This scholar felt that a thousand difficulties embarrassed the older nations, while here in America the

land is less crowded, the ground unoccupied with the debris of old customs and institutions; the people are more flexible, and the conditions are such that the vexed questions can be better solved in this new land than in any other nation upon our planet. And, as if to make the solution more easy, all the nations have sent to us their special representatives, that whatever genius or strength belongs to the temperament of each may here be present to lend us wisdom and so help to make the federation of the world. To be an American patriot, therefore, is to be one of the architects of universal history.

Our land seems to be divinely ordained to be the teacher of the world in free institutions. Here every social and economic battle must be fought to a finish, and we must lay out our civic campaign with a keen sense that in the event of losing our battle there is no other unoccupied continent to which the race can retreat for a new trial.

But the chief incentive to patriotism springs out of a divine stamp upon our citizenship. Our nation in its origin, in all its history, in its laws, is not only religious but Christian. Our political system is only a form of applied Christianity. It is a Sermon on the Mount, taking on political form. Partisans may be misusing these institutions, and demagogues may be using our laws for selfish ends, but in the last analysis these laws represent an attempt to organize Christianity in the interest of each citizen. Our fathers' watchwords were intelligence, liberty, equal opportunity and justice. And today, whenever our institutions have failed to secure justice towards all it has been due to the people's lack of obedience to God, to want of faith in his providence. For wherein our institutions have failed, it has always been through our misuse of them and because of our sins against man and God, since there is no exigency in our civic or municipal life that may not be met, there is no wrong that may not be righted, no industrial problem that cannot be solved, by simple obedience to our free and Christian institutions.

We are Americans; and the patriotism of Washington and Webster and Lincoln should be ours. We are Christians, and the gentleness and justice, the honor and truth of Jesus Christ should be ours. Shall we be partisans where our fathers were patriots? Shall we choose demagogues for rulers, where our fathers made only the noblest scholars monarchs over them? Shall our children be pigmies, when our fathers were giants in mind and conscience? O men and women! We also are the children of the prophets of liberty and religion. Let us also be optimists, because we are patriots in the Lord. *Condensed* from an *Address* by *Dr. Newell Dwight Hillis.*

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

The hour for serving God is always—Thackery reminds us—now.

In these beautiful words Dr. Lyman Abbott announced the death of a great Christian: "A human spirit of rare beauty passed on into another stage of life, and *an instrument for service exquisitely tempered to the highest uses* was lost to the world, when Dr. Charles Cuthbert Hall died last week". Shall we not strive to become such instruments?

Our Prayer.

Jesus, Master, whom I serve,
Though so feebly and so ill,
Strengthen hand and heart and nerve
All thy bidding to fulfil.
Open thou mine eyes to see
All the work thou hast for me. *F. R. Havergal.*

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Paul as an orator. Review his speech at Antioch, Acts 13; at Lystra, Acts 14; at Athens, Acts 17; his farewell at Miletus, Acts 20; and study his speeches at his arrest and legal trials, Acts 22, 23, 24 and 26.
2. Motives for missionary effort. See the Second Topic.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

See the suggestion on page 147.

In Note-Book write Chapter XV, A Prisoner in the Castle.

THE THINGS WHICH ARE NOT SEEN (REVIEW)

Golden Text

We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal. 2 Corinthians 4.18

READING LESSON 2 Corinthians 4.1-5.4

A GENERAL REVIEW OF ACTS XVII-XXII

See directions on page 148.

Lesson I. Paul and Silas journeyed on to Thessalonica. There they taught in the synagogue at first. A great multitude believed their message, and the jealousy of the Jews was aroused. They stirred up the rabble into a mob, and, failing to find Paul and Silas, they seized Jason and brought him before the rulers, charging him with receiving in his house those who were acting contrary to the laws of Cæsar and were proclaiming Jesus as another King. Jason on giving security was allowed to go free. Paul and Silas left the city and went on to Berœa, where the people were ready to receive the word and to examine the Scriptures, and where many of them accepted Paul's teaching concerning Christ. Not content with driving Paul from Thessalonica, Jews from that place followed him to Berœa and again stirred up the people against him. Silas and Timothy remained for a time, but Paul was escorted by the brethren as far as Athens.

At Athens Paul's spirit was aroused by the great number of idols he saw everywhere, and in synagogue and in market place, to Jews and proselytes and to Epicurean and Stoic philosophers, he preached Jesus and the resurrection. The Athenians took delight in hearing something new, and they brought Paul unto the Areopagus and had him explain his new teaching.

Lesson III. Standing in the midst of the Areopagus Paul addressed the throng. He referred to an inscription that he had seen on one of their altars—To an Unknown God— and said that the One whom they worshipped in ignorance he declared unto them. God who made the world and all things does not dwell in temples, nor does he need anything, for he himself is the source of life and all things. He made all nations brothers, he would have them all seek and find him, but he is not far from every one, for in him each one lives. Being God's children, we ought not to think that our Father is like any image made by man. Their ignorance God had overlooked in the past, but now he called them to change their views, for there will come a day when he will judge the world by the One whom he had appointed, whom he had raised from the dead. At the reference to the resurrection some of Paul's hearers mocked; others said that they would hear him again, and thus he was dismissed. Among those who believed was Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris.

Lesson IV. Paul went on to Corinth and there made his home with Aquila and Priscilla and worked at their common trade of tent-making. He preached in the synagogue on the Sabbaths. Silas and Timothy joined him, and encouraged by their presence he preached more zealously to the Jews. The Jews opposed him so that he turned from them to the Gentiles, and preached to them in the house of Titus Justus, near the synagogue. Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, and many Corinthians believed and were baptized. By a vision at night he was encouraged, and he labored at Corinth eighteen months.

At Corinth the Jews became so hostile to Paul that they brought him before Gallio, the proconsul, and charged him with persuading men to worship contrary to the law, but Gallio would not hear them. After awhile Paul left on his return journey to Antioch, stopping at Ephesus on the way. He landed at Cæsarea and went to Jerusalem and then to

Antioch. After some little time at Antioch he started forth on his third missionary journey, going through the region of Galatia and Phrygia and on to Ephesus. Apollos, an Alexandrian Jew, had taught at Ephesus, and after receiving instruction from Aquila and Priscilla had gone on to Corinth before Paul arrived. Paul found that the disciples at Ephesus were "John the Baptist's disciples", and he had them baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, and they received the Holy Spirit.

Paul preached in the synagogue of the Jews at Ephesus for three months, and then, owing to Jewish hostility, turned to the Gentiles. He spent two years teaching at the school of Tyrannus, and multitudes throughout the province of Asia came to hear him. Miracles wrought through him increased the belief in the truth of his message. The sacredness of Jesus Christ's name was impressed on the people by an attempt of certain exorcists to cure a demon-possessed by naming over him the name of "Jesus whom Paul preacheth". Crying out that he knew Jesus and Paul, but not them, the demon-possessed attacked the exorcists so violently that they escaped with difficulty. Many of the believers confessed their evil deeds and many of the magicians publicly burned their scrolls which were of great money value.

It was Paul's purpose, Luke tells us, to return to Macedonia and Achaia on his way to Jerusalem, and then go to Rome. While he stayed on awhile longer in Ephesus, he sent Timothy and Erastus into Macedonia.

Lesson VIII. Demetrius, a silversmith of Ephesus, occasioned a riot by calling a meeting of the craftsmen of the city who made shrines of Diana and warning them that their business might have to be given up because Paul was teaching the people that images were not gods. The very worship of Diana was threatened, he added. The crowds in the city took up their shout of "Great is Diana of the Ephesians". On to the theatre, was the cry, and seizing Gaius and Aristarchus, companions of Paul, they rushed to that place of meeting. Though the greater part did not know what the tumult was about, for two hours they shouted themselves hoarse with their cry, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians". The town clerk at last quieted them. In a tactful speech he assured them that a few strangers could not affect the unquestionable fact that Ephesus was the guardian of the great Diana, told them Gaius and Aristarchus could be charged with no crime, that Demetrius and the craftsmen should bring their matter, if they had any, before the proconsul, and warned them that they might be called to account for this inexcusable riot. He then dismissed them, and the uproar was over.

Paul left Ephesus and spent several months in Troas, Philippi, Thessalonica and Berœa. During this time his Second Epistle to the Corinthians was written. He went on to Corinth where he wrote his Epistle to the Romans. He had purposed sailing directly from there to Syria with the money he had collected for the Church at Jerusalem, but a plot against him led him to return by way of Macedonia. He tarried at Philippi and at Troas. At the latter place he restored Tychichus to life. He went on by land to Assos, and there embarked on a coasting vessel.

Lesson IX. Paul's vessel stopped at Miletus, and a message was sent to the elders of the Church at Ephesus to meet Paul there. In his farewell words he summed up his work while with them, reminding them how he had faithfully served the Lord in spite of the plots of the Jews, and how he had taught them all things profitable for them to know. He was on his way to Jerusalem; he felt impelled to go, though he knew that bonds and afflictions awaited him, but he held not his life as dear unto himself, his only wish being to fulfill his mission. They would not see him again, and he wished them to bear witness that he had faithfully warned and taught them. He urged them to be faithful in their care of the Church, and to be on their guard against false teachers. Then he commended them to the care of God, and exhorted them to follow his example in not coveting wealth, in helping the weak, in remembering Christ's words that it is more blessed to give than to receive. After kneeling with Paul in prayer the elders sorrowfully embraced him and escorted him to his ship.

Paul sailed around to Patara, and there he embarked in a ship bound directly across to Phœnicia. At Tyre the ship left its freight, and

this gave Paul an opportunity to seek out the brethren there. They urged him not to go to Jerusalem, but not being able to dissuade him they all accompanied him to the beach and bade him farewell. After a day at Ptolemais, where the voyage was finished, Paul and his company went on to Cæsarea and abode with Philip. Agabus foretold Paul's captivity, and all urgently besought him not to go to Jerusalem, but Paul only reproved them for breaking his heart. He was ready, he declared, not only to be bound but to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus; then, said they, the will of the Lord be done. The journey was continued, and at Jerusalem the brethren received them gladly.

Lesson XI. To prove to the Jews of Jerusalem that he observed the Jewish customs, Paul consented to undergo the rite of purification with four others. The seven days were almost over when Jews from Asia saw him in the temple, and created a great commotion among the people by shouting out that here was a man who had spoken everywhere against them and their laws; and they charged him also with having brought Greeks into the sacred place,—for they had seen Trophimus the Ephesian in the city with him, and they assumed that he had brought him into the temple. The people seized Paul, dragged him outside, and would have killed him had not the news of the uproar been brought to the chief captain in command of the garrison. With soldiers and centurions he charged down upon the crowd, rescued Paul, and had him bound with chains and taken toward the stairs leading to the fort. Surprised at Paul's speaking to him in Greek, the chief captain asked if he were not an Egyptian who had raised an insurrection, and Paul promptly told him that he was a Jew of Tarsus, a citizen of no mean city, and asked permission to speak to the crowd.

Lesson XII. Permission to speak was granted Paul, and standing on the stairs he addressed the crowd in Hebrew. He told them of his birth as a Jew, his persecution of the Christians, his conversion, his loss and return of sight, his coming to Jerusalem where in a trance he was told that he must go to the Gentiles. "Kill him," the people shouted as the word "Gentiles" was mentioned, and so great was the tumult that the officer hurried Paul into the fort. There he was ordered to be scourged, but the order was not carried out because Paul announced that he was a Roman citizen.

A REVIEW BY MEANS OF ALLUSIONS

See directions on page 170.

"I feel something of what Paul felt when his spirit was stirred within him," wrote William Carey from Calcutta.

I am determined to know nothing as a public man save Jesus Christ and him crucified; and in this country I see him crucified again in the person of the slave. *William Lloyd Garrison.*

In the charity that thinketh no evil, in softness of spirit and grace of life, the saints are invulnerable to irritations which grievously exasperate men of an inferior spirit. *Dr. Watkinson.*

"For her, three noisy hours of fierce acclaim
When shook the theater with craftsmen's cheers;
For him her worshippers maligned, a Name
That claims the clamors of the endless years."

Stretching out his hands to an unknown God, man heeds not the God in whom he lives and moves and has his being. *T. H. Green.*

Because the weakness of God is stronger than the cleverness of men, the Almighty is continually using a humble, unexpected instrument to attain a vast result. *C. E. Scott.*

And Leddra, too, is dead. But from his prison,
The day before his death, he sent these words
Unto the little flock of Christ: "Whatever
May come upon the followers of the Light,—
Distress, affliction, famine, nakedness,
Or perils in the city or the sea,
Or persecution, or even death itself,—
I am persuaded that God's armor of Light,
As it is loved and lived in, will preserve you. *Longfellow.*

If we had anticipated creation, we should never have guessed that it would have been fashioned as we find it; and if the redemption of the race in the Crucified does not square with our philosophic fancies, it only shows once more that the unwisdom of God is beyond the cleverness of the creature, and that the shortcomings of God surpass the masterpieces of men. *Dr. W. L. Watkinson.*

We have no right to "suppose" that another has done a wrong thing and then start our supposition as a fact. A large proportion of the miserable gossip which is retailed by idle people in drawing-rooms and other places is started just as the story about Paul started. *J. R. Miller.*

So, like the Saint at Corinth, well content
The craftsman's task we ply
If, with the weaving, rise another tent
Eternal in the sky. *John Elliott Bowman.*

There have been men like those Jews in every age and every land who have delighted in stirring up others. There is no community free from such tormentors.

When Alexander Mackay went to Uganda, and their king died, two thousand men were killed that he might not go into the other world unattended. When that king's son and successor died, not one life was sacrificed. Christianity had turned their superstition and cruel practices upside down.

Men must feel after God in prayer, in aspiration, in meditation. They must "practice the presence of God", that in the persistent groping after him they may attain unto a sensitiveness of touch that perceives him everywhere. *Dr. J. H. Jowett.*

Let us be quite certain that in our honest ambition to understand all mysteries and all knowledge we are not strangers to that experience of Love Divine.—*Charles Sylvester Horne.*

Nothing is so needed in this world as a sustained charity—the spirit which hopeth all things. *John A. Hutton.*

"The most of us seem to be always in quest
Of something that's novel and new."

A PICTURE REVIEW FOR YOUNG PUPILS

Before class-time have the pictures on the next page copied upon your blackboard. Each picture should be covered with a piece of paper attached at the top by paste so that it can be quickly removed. Tear off one paper at a time, and question your pupils about the lesson which the picture recalls.

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER PUPILS

1. What did the people of Thessalonica say that Paul had done? 2. To what city did Paul then go? 3. What good word is said about the people of that place? 4. What altar did Paul see in Athens? 5. What did he tell the Athenians? 6. What did some of them say? 7. What was Paul's trade? 8. Why did he turn from the Jews at Corinth to the Gentiles? 9. What words of encouragement did he hear in a vision? 10. In what did he say he gloried? 11. What did he say are the things which last? 12. Which is the greatest? 13. What does it do? 14. What does it not do? 15. What did he say about giving? 16. What was the cause of the riot at Ephesus? 17. What words of Jesus did Paul repeat to the Ephesian elders? 18. What were some of the things Paul had to suffer? 19. Where was he arrested? 20. What did the mob do? 21. What did Paul tell the Captain. 22. What did the captain do with him?

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR OLDER PUPILS

1. Upon what one theme did Paul preach to the Corinthians? 2. How did the Jews of Berœa differ from those of Thessalonica? 3. Describe the riot at Ephesus. 4. Tell in your own words Paul's address at Athens. 5. What cities did Paul visit on his second journey? 6. What were the results of his labors in each city? 7. What cities did he visit on his third journey? 8. What were the results of his labors in each city? 9. On which of Paul's three journeys did he accomplish the most? 10. On which did he have the most to endure?

I
II
III
TO THE UNKNOWN GOD
IV
Corinth
V
Far be it from me to glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ
XII
I AM A ROMAN
GOLDEN TEXT FOR THE QUARTER
The things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal. 2 Cor. 4. 18
VI
THE GREATEST THING IN THE WORLD
XI
X
IX
VIII
VII
Grace of Giving

A REVIEW OF VERSES

Repeat (or write) the verse which:—

1. Begins, These were more noble.
2. Tells what the Thessalonians thought Paul was doing.
3. Declares Paul's Roman citizenship.
4. Was Paul's message to the Athenians.
5. Tells what Paul taught the Ephesians.
6. Begins, I hold not my life dear.
7. Begins, In all things I gave you an example.
8. Gives Paul's words of comfort spoken to the Thessalonians concerning the dead.
9. Begins, Love suffereth long.
10. Begins, When I was a child.
11. Uses the word mirror in a figure of speech.
12. Compares the three greatest things with one another.
13. Tells the kind of giver that is pleasing to God.

A REVIEW CONTEST

See directions on page 153.

1. What woman of Thyatira was baptized? 2. In what city were there diligent Bible students? 3. What did the mob at Ephesus cry? 4. What is the greatest thing in the world? 5. Of what is the love of money the source? 6. In what Epistle does Paul give a list of his sorrows and sufferings? 7. How did Paul support himself at Corinth? 8. In what city did he bid the people give up their idols?

SUBJECTS FOR ESSAYS

1. Draw a map of Paul's Second Missionary Journey. Below it write an account of the mission.
2. Draw a map of Paul's Third Missionary Journey and below it write an account of the mission.
3. Paul the Preacher.
4. Paul the Letter-writer.
5. Paul's Hymn of Love.
6. The Epistle to the Thessalonians.
7. The First Epistle to the Corinthians.
8. The Second Epistle to the Corinthians.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. Give an account of Paul before the Sanhedrin. (Acts 23.1-10.) 2. What words of Jesus explain Paul's figure of speech in verse 3? (Mt. 23.27.) 3. What comforting words came to Paul at night? (Acts 23. 11.) 4. What vow did one of the early judges of Israel make and how was it carried out? 5. What does Robert Burns say about well-laid plans o' mice an' men? 6. What did Lysias write in a letter to Felix? 7. What was the third hour of the night? (*Guide*, p. 375.) 8. Describe the journey to Cæsarea. (Acts 23.23, 24, 31-35.) 9. When had Paul expressed a wish to see Rome?

Questions to Think About. 1. Was Paul justified in his words to the high priest? 2. What appeal to prejudice did Paul make? 3. Was this justifiable? 4. What is meant by "They bound themselves under a curse"? (*Guide*, p. 375.) 5. What is a plot? 6. What do we call those who take part in plots, and why? (Conspirators—those who conspire against others.) 7. What often happens when there are many in a plot? 8. What is the meaning of our saying that "walls have ears"? What heroic resolve to save life is immortalized in "Curfew must not ring to-night"? 10. What words of Paul have we had about things working together for good? 11. Were they working together for his good just now at Jerusalem? 12. Since he had been divinely assured that he should go to Rome, why did he trouble to send his nephew to Lysias with the news of the plot made against him? 13. What action of Pilate in the trial of Christ is recalled by Lysias' shifting the responsibility concerning Paul on Felix? 14. Where was Cæsarea? 15. What did Lysias say in his letter to Felix which was not truthful? 16. Why did Felix ask Paul from what province he was?

FOURTH QUARTER

LESSON I—OCTOBER 1

A PLOT THAT FAILED

Golden Text

They shall fight against thee; but they shall not prevail against thee: for I am with thee, saith Jehovah, to deliver thee. Jeremiah 1.19

LESSON Acts 23: verses 14-24 printed MEMORIZE verses 20, 21

14 And they came to the chief priests and the elders, and said, We have bound ourselves under a great curse, to taste nothing until we have killed Paul. 15 Now therefore do ye with the council signify to the chief captain that he bring him down unto you, as though ye would judge of his case more exactly: and we, before he comes near, are ready to slay him. 16 But Paul's sister's son heard of their lying in wait, and he came and entered into the castle and told Paul. 17 And Paul called unto him one of the centurions, and said, Bring this young man unto the chief captain; for he hath something to tell him. 18 So he took him, and brought him to the chief captain, and saith, Paul the prisoner called me unto him, and asked me to bring this young man unto thee, who hath something to say to thee. 19 And the chief captain took him by the hand, and going aside asked him privately, What is it that thou hast to tell me? 20 And he said, The Jews have agreed to ask thee to bring down Paul to-morrow unto the council, as though thou wouldest inquire somewhat more exactly concerning him. 21 Do not thou therefore yield unto them: for there lie in wait for him of them more than forty men, who have bound themselves under a curse, neither to eat nor to drink till they have slain him: and now are they ready, looking for the promise from thee. 22 So the chief captain let the young man go, charging him, Tell no man that thou hast signified these things to me. 23 And he called unto him two of the centurions, and said, Make ready two hundred soldiers to go as far as Cæsarea, and horsemen threescore and ten, and spearmen two hundred, at the third hour of the night: 24 and *he bade them* provide beasts, that they might set Paul thereon, and bring him safe unto Felix the governor.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

I. Paul before the Sanhedrin, 22.30-23.10.
II. Paul's Comforter, 23.11.
III. The Plot of the Jews, 23.12-15.
IV. The Plot Discovered and Made Known to Lysias, 23.16-22.
V. Paul sent to Cæsarea, 23.23-25.

14. *They.* See verses 12 and 13.—*The chief priests and elders.* The leaders of the Sanhedrin.—*We have bound ourselves under a great curse.* See verse 12 and p. 375.

15. *Do ye with the council signify.* "The Bezan text begins, 'We ask you to do this for us: when ye have summoned the council, signify'. This makes clear that the Sanhedrin was first to meet on the morrow, and then send a formal message to Lysias."—*As though ye would judge of his case more exactly.* This sounds like a plausible reason.

16. *Paul's sister's son.* "You can count on a boy to learn what is on foot." It has been suggested that this nephew was, as Paul himself had been, a rabbinical student at Jerusalem at this time. "A secret known to fifty conspirators (verse 13), and requiring the complicity of an indefinite number more, is no secret at all. There were sure to be dark hints, ominous gestures, words of ill-concealed triumph, and, indeed, so unanimous among the orthodox Jews, and

even, we fear, among some nominal Jewish Christians, was the detestation of the man who taught 'apostasy from Moses', that in most circles there was no need for any pretense of concealment. When St. Peter had been in prison, and in peril of execution, the Christian community of Jerusalem had been in a ferment of alarm and sorrow, and prayer had been made day and night without ceasing to God for him; but St. Peter, and especially St. Peter of that early time, was regarded with feelings very different from those with which the Judaic believers looked on the bold genius whose dangerous independence treated Mosaism and its essential covenant as a thing of the past for converted Gentiles. We hear of no prayer from any of the elders or the 'many myriads' on behalf of St. Paul. He owed to a relative, and not to the church, the watchful sympathy which alone rescued him from murder" (*Farrar*).

20. *Inquire.* The Jews would *judge,* verse 15; Lysias would *inquire.*

23. *He called unto him two of the centurions.* He was a man of prompt action.—*The third hour of the night.* Nine o'clock in the evening.

24. *He bade them provide beasts, that they might set Paul thereon.* After his treatment at the hands of the mob in the temple, Paul would scarcely be able to go on foot a distance of over sixty miles, and besides there was need for haste.—*And bring him safe unto Felix the governor.* As Pilate had tried to shift the responsibility concerning Jesus upon Herod Antipas, so Lysias is nothing loth to turn Paul over to the jurisdiction of Felix.

25-30. Lysias's letter is very courteous. He acknowledges, as Pilate did concerning Jesus, that Paul had "nothing laid to his charge worthy of death or of bonds", but does not recommend that he be set free.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

14. *They came to the chief priests and the elders.* That they should, without scruple, propose such a conspiracy to the supreme court of the land, seems to the modern man almost incredible, but accords with the Jewish opinions and practices of that age. Thus Philo, who is one of the purest religious teachers outside the New Testament, directly justifies the assassination of apostates from Judaism. "It is highly proper that all who have a zeal for virtue should have a right to punish with their own hands, without delay, those who are guilty of this crime." *Lyman Abbott, The Acts.*

14. *We have bound ourselves under a great curse.* Literally, they had "anathematized themselves", invoked the curse of God upon themselves, in case of violation of their vow, asserting that they would neither eat nor drink until they had killed Paul. Such was at this time the state of Jewish society, that such execrable oaths were not only made by the fanatical Jews, but made with the cognizance and approval of their rulers. Josephus mentions a similar conspiracy against Herod the Great, into which a number of Jews entered, on account of his introducing new customs which they esteemed violations of the Mosaic law. Ten men conspired to slay him, and swore to undergo any dangers in the attempt; and when the plot was discovered, and they were about to be put to death, they declared that the conspiracy to which they had sworn was a holy and pious act.

The Jews who had made such oaths could, in case of failure, easily procure absolution from their rabbis. Lightfoot gives the following quotation from the Talmud: "He that hath made a vow not to eat anything, woe to him if he eat, and woe to him if he eat not. If he eat, he sinneth against his vow; if he eat not, he sinneth against his life. What must a man do in his case? Let him go to the wise men, and they will loose his vow; according as it is written, The tongue of the wise is health." *Paton J. Gloag.*

24. *Bring him safe unto Felix the governor.* Lysias was extremely glad to get rid of a prisoner who created such excitement, and who was the object of an animosity so keen that it might at any moment lead to a riot. At that day, too, charges of bribery flew about in the most dangerous manner. Celer, a Roman knight of far higher rank than himself, had actually been dragged by Jews round the walls of Jerusalem, and finally beheaded, for receiving a bribe from the Samaritans. So corrupt was the Roman administration at the hands of even the highest officials, that if Paul were murdered Lysias might easily have been charged with having accepted a bribe to induce him to connive at this nefarious conspiracy. *F. W. Farrar,* in *The Life and Work of Paul.*

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. After the Jews of Corinth opposed Paul and he had gone to the house of Titus Justus, what comforting words came to him in a vision at night? Of what band of men did Felix at first suppose Paul to be? Why were they so-called? When before had Paul had a night journey to escape his enemies? What has happened since Paul reached Jerusalem for the last time?

Paul before the Sanhedrin. The day after the riot of the Jews in the temple and the arrest of Paul, Lysias summoned a meeting of the Sanhedrin and brought his prisoner before them. Paul had been accused in the temple of teaching contrary to the law, and his first words protested his innocence, his conscience testified that his life had been loyal. Thereupon the high priest ordered those near to smite Paul in the mouth, and Paul's fiery temper flamed forth: "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall", he boldly declared (the high priest was what Jesus had called the Pharisees, a whited sepulchre, like the tombs, full of corruption within but presenting a fair appearance without); "sittest thou to judge me according to the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?" Those near protested against such language to the high priest, and Paul became calmer and confessed that he had forgotten his office, that he should not have spoken evil of a ruler. Knowing full well that he could receive no just judgment from that tribunal, he "flung an apple of discord among them" by declaring himself a thorough Pharisee, persecuted because of his Messianic hope and belief in the resurrection of the dead. Thereupon the Sadducees, who did not believe in the resurrection, were violently angered, the Pharisees took Paul's part against them, and so stormy a scene ensued that Lysias, fearing for the life of his prisoner, ordered his troops to take him back to the castle.

"Be of Good Cheer." To Paul, in prison, bruised and depressed, keenly disappointed in the great hope of reconciling the Judean Christians, and keenly feeling the hatred of his own countrymen, there came in the night a word of divine approval and hope. "Be of good cheer", was the message, as he had testified for his Lord in Jerusalem, so should he in Rome.

Leaving Jerusalem for the Last Time. Meanwhile the Jews had been planning how they could put Paul to death. Forty of them vowed that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed him, and when day came they presented to the chief priests and the elders a monstrous conspiracy. The latter were to have the Sanhedrin ask Lysias to bring Paul before them again to judge his case, for the former trial had been interrupted, and these forty men would slay him on the way thither. To this the priests and elders seem to have readily agreed. The plot, however, became known in some way to Paul's nephew, who reported it at once to Paul in prison. Paul asked one of the centurions to take the young man to the chief captain, as he had something of importance to tell. Lysias led him aside for a private conference, and the youth told of the plot. Charging his informer to tell no one, Lysias dismissed him, and quickly carried out his plan to outwit the conspirators. At nine that evening Paul was provided with a horse and started off with an escort of two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen, and two hundred spearmen. He was being sent to Felix, the governor at Cæsarea.

"There are many things which we would be glad to know at the moment when Paul leaves Jerusalem never to see it again", observes Dr. Stifler in his "Introduction to the Acts". What were the thoughts of his great heart? Did he communicate with James and the elders? Did he have an opportunity to say farewell to his kinsfolk? Luke omits everything else to write minutely how the order and discipline of the Roman world rescued Paul and defeated the hate of Judaism. He tells the number of soldiers, the number of their commanders, he describes the journey and makes us see the whole event as distinctly as if he had been there. We can almost hear the rattling of the soldiers' sabers, and the clang of the horses' hoofs as they start down the road to Antipatris. If Luke lingers thus over the story and fills it with details, he must intend to show how God's invisible hand could use the world power, which he has ordained to serve him in protecting his servant from apostate Judaism."

At Cæsarea. All that night they travelled till Antipatris, thirty-five miles away, was reached; the danger from the assassins being over, the soldiers returned and the cavalry continued the journey with Paul to Cæsarea, and took him at once to the procurator's court. Felix read the letter which they had brought from Lysias, a cleverly constructed letter narrating that he had rescued the prisoner from rioters in the temple because he was a Roman, and informing the governor about the trial before the Sanhedrin where he had been found guilty of nothing worthy of the bonds or death, and stating that he had directed his accusers to appear before Felix. "From what province are you?" questioned the governor, wishing to learn whether Paul came within his jurisdiction. "Cilicia", returned Paul. Felix was procurator of Judea, under Festus who was proconsul of Syria. Cilicia at this time was united to Syria for purposes of government. Telling him that he would hear his case when his accusers arrived, Felix ordered Paul kept in Herod's palace. Thus Paul is back again in Cæsarea within two weeks after Agabus had predicted his bonds, but he is of good cheer, he is certain of going to Rome.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Paul was imprisoned in the Tower of Antonia. See the last lesson.

Here is a description of the journey from Jerusalem to Cæsarea, condensed from Conybeare and Howson's "Life of Paul". The road lay first northwards along the high mountainous region which divides the valley of the Jordan from the great western plain of Judea. About midnight they would reach Gophna, and turn to descend the coast on the left. Presently they began to descend among the western eminences and valleys of the mountain-country, startling the shepherd on the hills of Ephraim, and rousing the village peasant, who woke only to curse his oppressor, as he heard the hoofs of the horses on the pavement, and the well-known tramp of the Roman soldiers. About daybreak they came to the ridge of the last hill. The road now turned northwards, across the rich lands of the plain of Sharon, through fields of wheat and barley, just then almost ready for the harvest. On the east were the mountains of Samaria, rising gradually above each other, and bounding the plain in that direction; on the left lay a line of low wooded hills, shutting it in from the sea. Between the higher and lower range, but on the level ground, was Antipatris, whence the foot-soldiers returned to Jerusalem. They were no longer necessary to secure Paul's safety, for no plot by the way was now to be apprehended, and their presence might be required in the fortress of Antonia. In the course of the afternoon the remaining soldiers with their weary horses would enter the streets of Cæsarea, and the centurion would proceed at once to the governor and give up his prisoner, at the same time presenting the despatch with which he was charged by the commandant of the garrison at Jerusalem. For Cæsarea see page 176.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Paul was fully aware that it was God's purpose he should proclaim the gospel in Rome, and therefore his life was safe. Yet when he heard of the plot to kill him, he did not passively wait for God to frustrate it. He did his part toward helping carry out God's will. Have you taught your pupils the truth that they must do what they can to answer their own prayers? "When you ask God to help you do anything", a five-year-old lad explained, "you have to try your very hardest yourself, then he does the last little bit you can't manage. If he did it all it would be spoilings."

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. When Paul and his company stopped at Cæsarea on their way to Jerusalem what did Agabus prophesy? How did Paul regard the efforts made to keep him from going on to Jerusalem? About two weeks have passed since he was in Cæsarea, free to come or go as he chose, and in our lesson to-day we see him back again in Cæsarea, but in prison. Very exciting have been the events crowded into these two weeks, and he has barely escaped with his life. Indeed, you can read no true story of adventure so full of stirring

action and hair-breadth escape as that of Paul from the time he left Cæsarea for Jerusalem till he reached Rome.

For Older Pupils. During the Civil War, Richard Oglesby, Governor of Illinois, lost all hope in the success of the cause he had so much at heart, and wrote President Lincoln that he thought all was lost. In answer he received this telegram: "Dear Dick: Read Exodus 14.13, Fear ye not; stand still and see the salvation of the Lord. Abraham Lincoln." Paul's life has been a strenuous one, he has dared and endured all things, but now he has to endure without the daring, he is in prison and must stand still and see the salvation of the Lord. He does not fear, for there comes a message of comfort. What?

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I God's Idea of Rewards

The Reward of Imprisonment is More Imprisonment. "Be of good cheer: for as thou hast testified concerning me at Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome." As one reads these words of encouragement that Paul heard in the dark prison at night, one involuntarily thinks of the modern phrase so often spoken with a laugh, "Cheer up, cheer up, the worst is yet to come"! Paul had testified concerning Jesus the Christ at Jerusalem, and beating and imprisonment had been his fate. He was to testify in Rome, and imprisonment and finally death awaited him. His Master promises him as a fitting reward—a prison.

And yet he was to be of good cheer! And grandly he filled the role of a great optimist. As another writes forcibly: "Unbelievable though it appears, that broken, utterly worn-out man actually took these terrible words as a compliment and agreed with them—took these sentences at their face value, and felt, as he lay down to sleep again, much as a man might feel who had been wakened in the night to be crowned! This is the giddy optimist who had written to the very Romans he was so anxious to see that 'All things work together for good to them that love God'. And we find him writing from that work-stopping, patience-trying, nerve-wearing Roman prison, 'But what things are gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. And I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord.' His prison letters are the most joyful and triumphant of his writings, whilst afterwards, when he, having gone through it all, could look back and moralize upon it, we find him writing in a private letter, 'I have fought a good fight. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of life'."

The Reward of Work is More Work. "Life has always seemed to me like a large arena in which we are called to play the game. And the best thing has always seemed to me to be the capacity for play and the playing; that is, work." This is Dr. Grenfell's idea of life, and it is a true one, for it is Christ's. You recall the parable of the talents. The five-talent man had gained five talents more, and the two-talent man had gained two talents more, and their Lord spoke to each of them the same words of commendation: "Well done, good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things", and gave to each the same reward, "I will set thee over many things". The reward for faithful service is not release from further service but opportunity for increased service. The doing of what we can in small services brings to us the ability to do yet greater services. The reward for faithful work is more work.

God is Insatiable. Once set your soul on satisfying God, and you will find him insatiable. As much greater as God is than ourselves, so much greater and swifter do his plans for our advancement and enrichment grow. There is positively no satisfying the ambitions of God for the chosen soul he has once taken up.

You congratulate yourself that the lines have fallen to you in pleasant places; it is whispered in the secret courts of your soul that somehow you must be God's favorite, and your comforts are the rewards of your fidelity. Do not deceive yourselves. God's methods are not so simple as that. Your easy-going life may be just the measure of your capacity; you are the duller scholar the master can take no special pains with. God does not put a heavy load into a light-built cart, or a ten-ton burden upon a one-ton axle. Your task is

your opportunity, but if your task is light it is because your capacity is small and the task is measured to fit it. *John Ackworth.*

II Minor Parts

Paul's Sister's Son. The Editor of an English periodical has given much study and thought to this unknown lad and finds that he possessed many virtues. He was a young man of quick wits. He was capable of prompt action which probably saved his uncle's life. He seems to have done an excellent bit of detective work in an exceedingly clever way. When he had the details of the conspiracy in his possession, he exercised the soundest judgment as to the best course to pursue. He was heroic as well as cool in judgment. If his knowledge and possible revelation of the plot had been discovered, he might himself have been sacrificed by the furious fanatical assassins. He was just one of the rank and file of men, we never hear of him again, he possessed none of the great qualities of his uncle, but in this one act he justified his existence. His was a very minor part in God's great plan of extending his kingdom, but he did that part well.

We cannot be Paul, but we may fit ourselves to act the part of his sister's son.

All Service Counts with God. Mrs. Ballington Booth one day was feeling keenly her failures and discouragements, and wondering if she really was worth anything in her Father's vineyard, when her little boy came in from a walk in the city park. Running up to her with great delight, he put into her lap a little handful of wilted chickweed. Mrs. Booth said she picked up the worthless weeds with a cry of gratitude, and kissed the little hand which had brought them to her. They were in themselves of absolutely no account, but they were all the flowers he had, and his loving thought lifted the burden from her heart. "Ah!" she said, "shall not my Father take my little service, which oftentimes seems so worthless and unavailing, and count it precious because in my heart I longed to do great and beautiful things for him?"

A Fable with a Lesson. A prince went into his vineyard to examine it. He came to a peach-tree, and said, "What are you doing for me?" The tree said, "In the spring I give my blossoms and fill the air with fragrance, and on my boughs hangs the fruit which men will gather and carry into the palace for you." "Well done!" said the prince. To the chestnut he said, "What are you doing?" "I am making nests for the birds, and shelter cattle with my leaves and branches." And the prince said, "Well done!" Then he went down to the meadow and asked the grass what it was doing. "We are giving our lives for others, for your sheep and cattle, that they may be nourished." And the prince said, "Well done!"

Last of all he asked the tiny daisy what it was doing, and the daisy said: "Nothing, nothing. I cannot make a nesting-place for the birds, and I cannot give shelter for the cattle, and I cannot send fruit into the palace, and I cannot even give food for the sheep and cows—they do not want me in the meadow. All I can do is to be the best little daisy I can be." And the prince bent down and kissed the daisy, and said, "There is none better than thou."

Grand Missions.

Oh, think not, if thou art not called to work
In mission field of some far distant clime,
That thine is no grand mission. Every deed
That comes to thee in God's allotted time
Is just the greatest deed that thine could be,
Since God's high will appointed it to thee. *Anna Temple.*

Lacking the Purpose. It is not a question primarily of how much or how little you or I are able to do. It is what we have a disposition to do that counts. There are those who, if they would, could give time and strength and resources to the things of the kingdom; but the disposition is lacking. There was present at a recent meeting of a state apportionment committee in Connecticut a young woman of large means, who toiled at the tedious figures as patiently as any other. At a certain hour she excused herself to make a missionary address at a near-by church, but returned and took up the figuring again. Com-

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menting upon her interest in the work, it was suggested by one that she could well afford to give the time and money she did. "Yes", acquiesced another, "Miss H— can well afford to do what she does, but there are others who could afford to do a part, too, but they don't." *Zion's Herald.*

What Can You Do? Not "What would you like to do?" not, "What are you willing to do?" but, "What can you do with skill, and power, and sustained strength of will?" You may have love, you may have belief, you may have knowledge. What can you do with these gifts and acquirements? You love honor. What can you do to establish honor in the world? You love some one. What can you do to give the freedom of life to that person? To carry her burdens; to turn devotion into that service which makes place for growth, for rest, for beauty? You believe you are your brother's keeper: what can you do to make the world, not easier for him, but safer, more wholesome, and more human for him and for his children? You know a hundred things. What can you do with them? That is the question that Life puts to us all. *The Outlook.*

Mr. D. L. Moody's Motto. "I have this motto in my Bible, and I commend it to you; 'Do all the good you can; to all the people you can; in all the ways you can; and as long as ever you can.' If each of us will at once set about some work for God, and will keep at it three hundred and sixty-five days in the year, then a good deal will be accomplished. Let us so live that it may be truthfully said of us: We have done what we could."

A Minor Part for You. Did you have a share in making a glad Christmas for the lepers last year? Through the Department for Utilizing Surplus Material (see the last paragraph of page 169) an effort is made each year to have pictures sent to every leper home in time for Christmas. Such pictures should be started on their way about November first. Then there are many missionaries who would be made glad by receiving in time for distribution to their boys and girls at Christmas all the good things which you can send—dolls, toys, pictures, especially those illustrating the Bible stories, picture rolls, and a host of other things which you know they would like.

III Trust and Work

Paul's Course. We read in the eleventh verse of our lesson that the Lord stood by Paul at night and said, "Be of good cheer: for as thou hast testified concerning me at Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome." And then the next day Paul's nephew comes and tells him of the plot to slay him when being taken again before the Sanhedrin. Assured that he is to reach Rome, why does he not let matters take their course, expecting that in some miraculous way his life will be spared when the assassins make their attack? Why does he take the precaution to have his nephew inform Lysias of the plot against his life? Paul had perfect confidence in God's care and help, but this confidence rightly stimulated him to do his part toward securing his own safety. His trust in God made him calm and collected, showed him the best thing to be done, and encouraged him to do it. The fatalist believes that whatever is decreed will be, regardless of what man may do. The Christian believes that he is a co-worker with God, not only able but under obligation to do his part toward the consummation of God's will.

Two Ways of Trusting. In the paper published by the Salvation Army this suggestive story is told. A mother discovered her little daughter lying in the middle of a muddy garden path. She urged her to get up, but the child refused.

"I'm waiting," she placidly remarked.

"What for?" asked her mother.

"For God to pick me up", the young person answered. "I falled down and I pwayed God pick me up, and he doesn't do it vewy quick."

Her mother explained to her that she might lie there all day before God worked a miracle for her lazy little self, that he had given her sturdy arms and legs, an intelligent brain, the power of picking herself up, and he expected her to answer her own prayer.

There is another story, well known, of a small girl who prayed God to keep her brother from catching the birds, and then told her mother that she was sure God would do what she had asked, for she had been out and smashed the traps. Which child's "theology" was right?

Prayer for God's guidance, calm decision as to the right course to pursue, trust in God's help, and then courage to do—are not these the right steps in any emergency? "I put my shoulder to the wheel with my best judgment, and trust to God for the rest," wrote Admiral Farragut the week before he entered Mobile Bay. He was a valiant Christian officer, he trusted in God and sought his guidance, but he never failed to do all in his own power to secure success.

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

If you fear, cast all your care on God;
That anchor holds. *Tennyson.*

Trust in God should accompany, not take the place of, earnest effort.

The plot of the Jews whereby they expected to plunge their daggers into Paul's body proved the means by which Paul was enabled to bear his witness in Rome. God does overrule.

Our Prayer.

Father, to do great work for thee my hand
Is far too weak. Thou givest what may suit,—
Some little chips to cut with care minute,
Or tint, or grave, or polish. Others stand
Before their quarried marble fair and grand,
And make a life-work of the great design
Which thou has traced:—
Yet take the tiny stones that I have wrought,
Just one by one, as they were given by thee,
Not knowing what came next in thy wise thought;
And in thy temple-pavement give them place.
Frances R. Havergal.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. God's idea of rewards. See the First Topic.
2. Paul's nationality and family. See Chapter II of Ramsay's "Paul the Traveller".

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. What three charges were brought against Paul by the Jews through Tertullus? (Acts 24.1-9.) 2. How did Paul answer each one? 3. Who was Tertullus? 4. Were Tertullus's flattering words to Felix true? (Guide, ¶ 5, p. 386.) 5. Who was Felix, and what was his character? 6. Why was he deposed? 7. For what part of our Bible do "the law and the prophets", verse 14, stand? 8. What beliefs did Paul and the Jews hold in common? (Verses 14, 15.) 9. What did he believe which the Jews did not, although proclaimed in their Scriptures? (Acts 26.22, 23.) 10. How did Paul's themes, verse 25, arraign Felix (*Guide,* p. 383.) 11. With Felix' manner of settling the matter contrast that of Gallio. (Acts 18.12-16.) 12. How long did Paul remain in prison at Cæsarea? (Acts 24.27.) 13. How did he spend the time? (*Guide,* p. 385.) 14. What leads us to suppose that Paul had at his command considerable money at this time? (*Guide,* p. 383.) 15. Describe several kinds of custody observed by the Romans. (*Guide,* p. 384.) 16. What does tradition say that Luke did during this time? (*Guide,* p. 383.

Questions to Think About. 1. Did Paul say anything to Felix that was courteous? Were his words also true? 2. What is the force of Paul's words about the time he had spent in Jerusalem, verse 11? (*Guide,* p. 382.) 3. What is the force of his words in verse 14? (*Guide,* p. 382.) 4. What is the force of "Herein," verse 16? (*Guide,* p. 383.) 5. Why did not Felix free Paul? 6. Does Paul say that his conscience tells him he has always acted wholly right? 7. What does he say about his conscience? 8. What is the conscience? 9. Is the conscience always accurate? 10. By whose life and words should it be corrected? 11. Can we attain to a perfect conscience? 12. Can we make Paul's aim ours?

Note-Book Work. Write Chapter XVI, A Plot to Kill Paul.

PAUL BEFORE FELIX

Golden Text

Herein I also exercise myself to have a conscience void of offense toward God and men always. Acts 24.16

LESSON Acts 24: verses 10-21 printed MEMORIZE verses 14, 15

10 And when the governor had beckoned unto him to speak, Paul answered, Forasmuch as I know that thou hast been of many years a judge unto this nation, I cheerfully make my defence: 11 seeing that thou canst take knowledge that it is not more than twelve days since I went up to worship at Jerusalem: 12 and neither in the temple did they find me disputing with any man or stirring up a crowd, nor in the synagogues, nor in the city. 13 Neither can they prove to thee the things whereof they now accuse me. 14 But this I confess unto thee, that after the Way which they call a sect, so serve I the God of our fathers, believing all things which are according to the law, and which are written in the prophets; 15 having hope toward God, which these also themselves look for, that there shall be a resurrection both of the just and unjust. 16 Herein I also exercise myself to have a conscience void of offence toward God and men always. 17 Now after some years I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings: 18 amidst which they found me purified in the temple, with no crowd, nor yet with tumult: but *there were* certain Jews from Asia— 19 who ought to have been here before thee, and to make accusation, if they had aught against me. 20 Or else let these men themselves say what wrong-doing they found when I stood before the council, 21 except it be for this one voice, that I cried standing among them, Touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question before you this day.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

I. Paul before Felix, 1-23.
  1. Paul is Arraigned by Tertullus, 1-9.
  2. Paul Makes his Defence, 10-21.
  3. Felix Postpones Decision, 22, 23.

II. Felix before Paul, 24-27.
  1. Felix is Troubled by Paul's Words about Christ, Trembles, but does not Decide, 24-26.
  2. Felix Leaves Paul in Bonds, 27.

10. *Many years a judge unto this nation.* Felix had been procurator of Judea for several years. Compare Jesus' words to Pilate, John 18.34, and contrast Paul's courteous beginning with the fulsome flattery of Tertullus's words, verses 2-4. See ¶ 5, p. 386.

11. *Not more than twelve days since I went up to worship at Jerusalem.* From Cæsarea. Compare Peter's similar way of stating that the time had been too short to admit of an accusation being true, Acts 2.15. A crime committed so recently, too, could easily be investigated.

12. An answer to the first part of the charge of Tertullus, verse 5. *Stirring up a crowd* is the translation of a Greek phrase which literally means "making a stopping of a crowd." Paul had not stopped the passers-by and so collected a crowd.

14. An answer to the second part of the accusation in verse 5.—*After the Way which they call a sect.* "The Way" was the term which the Christians applied to themselves: "a sect", or heresy, was the term which *they,* their enemies, applied to them.—*Believing all things which are according to the law, and which are written in the prophets.* The law and the prophets stands for the Old Testament writings. Christianity, the Way, was not a new religion in Paul's mind, but a development of Judaism. "It is a wonder to some how Paul

could say this. To be sure he preached that Gentiles could be saved without circumcision. He associated converted Jews and Gentiles in the church, thus making nothing of ceremonial distinctions. But to believe the Bible is something more than to believe its letter and sometimes something different. It is to believe what God intended by the letter. If the Scriptures taught circumcision and other ceremonies, Paul knew their intent and their limitations. He knew and defined the object of the law (Gal. 3.24). He saw no antithesis between his teaching and that of Moses (Rom. 3.31; Gal. 3.21). He looked on the Law with great reverence and called it glorious (2 Cor. 3.7). As to the prophets he believed them, for was he not convinced that they foretold the very Jesus whom he preached and the leading facts in his history, his death and resurrection? And how could Paul's accusers claim to believe these same prophets when they denied him of whom they spoke?" (*James M. Stifler*).

15. *Which these also themselves look for.* The nation as a whole believed with the Pharisees in the resurrection, but the sect of the Sadducees denied it.

16. *Herein. On this account,* RVm. Because of his belief in a resurrection and judgment. "He's armed without that's innocent within" (*Pope*). Note that Paul does not affirm perfect attainment, but perfect aim.

17. *After some years.* His last visit, mentioned in Acts 18.22, was five years before.—*To bring alms.* The collection which, at Paul's request, the Gentile churches had sent for the relief of the poor at Jerusalem. See Rom. 15.25, 26.—*Offerings.* "We can readily understand that this word is simply an abbreviation for Paul's fuller account of the events of 21.26, 27, which Luke considers it unnecessary to repeat" (*Rackham*).

18. This answers the third charge, verse 6.—*Amidst which. In presenting which* (the offerings), RVm.—Certain Jews from Asia. Compare Acts 21.27. The dash at the end of the sentence shows that Paul in his excitement did not finish his speech.

20. *When I stood before the council.* See Acts 23.1-9.

23. *His friends.* Luke and Aristarchus were with him, and Philip the evangelist and his family lived in Cæsarea.

24. *Drusilla.* A daughter of Herod Agrippa I, whose death is narrated in Acts 12.20-23.—*The faith in Christ Jesus.* See Acts 20.21.

25. Paul's topics had reference to Felix' conduct: *righteousness*—Felix supposed he might perpetrate with impunity every kind of villainy, says Tacitus; *self-control*—Felix had induced Drusilla to leave her husband and marry him; *judgment to come*—for his murder of Jonathan, the high priest, and other sins. Compare John the Baptist's talk with Herod, Mark 6.14-20.—*Felix was terrified.* "Fear is not faith, but it may lead to faith, or it may lead to hardening" (*Maclaren*).

26. *He hoped withal that money would be given him of Paul.* "Several facts show clearly that, during the following four years, Paul had considerable command of money. Imprisonment and a long lawsuit are expensive. Felix hoped for a bribe, and a rich Roman official did not look for a small gift. Paul, therefore, wore the outward appearance of a man of means, like one in a position to bribe a Roman procurator. At Cæsarea he was confined in the palace of Herod; but he had to live, to maintain two attendants, and to keep up a respectable appearance. Many comforts, which are almost necessities, would be given by the guards, as long as they were kept in good humor, and it is expensive to keep guards in good humor. In Rome he was able to hire a lodging for himself and to live there, maintaining, of course, the soldier who guarded him. Where, then, was the money procured? Was it from new contributions collected in the churches? That seems most improbable, from their general poverty, from Paul's personal character, and from the silence of Luke on the point. Luke himself was probably a man dependent on his profession for his livelihood. There seems no alternative except that Paul's hereditary property was used in these four years. As to the exact facts, we must remain in ignorance. If Paul hitherto voluntarily abstained from using his fortune he now found himself justified by the importance of the case in acting differently. If, on the other hand, he had for a time been disowned by his family, then either a reconciliation had been brought about during his danger, or through death property had come to him as legal heir" (*Ramsay*).

27. *When two years were fulfilled.* Luke was with Paul, and tradition says

that it was during these two years that he learned about the life of Jesus and wrote his Gospel.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

23. *He gave order to the centurion that he should be kept in charge, and, should have indulgence.* He was not bound to fix any definite time for the trial, but might defer it at his own arbitrary pleasure; and he might also commit the prisoner at his discretion to any one of the several kinds of custody recognized by the Roman law. These were as follows:—First, confinement in the public jail (*custodia publica*), which was the most severe kind; the common jails throughout the Empire being dungeons of the worst description, where the prisoners were kept in chains, or even bound in positions of torture. Of this we have seen an example in the confinement of Paul and Silas at Philippi. Secondly, free custody (*custodia libera*), which was the mildest kind. Here the accused was committed to the charge of a magistrate or senator, who became responsible for his appearance on the day of trial; but this species of detention was only employed in the case of men of high rank. Thirdly, military custody (*custodia militaris*), which was introduced at the beginning of the Imperial régime. In this last custody the accused was given in charge to a soldier, who was responsible with his own life for the safe keeping of his prisoner. This was further secured by chaining the prisoner's right hand to the soldier's left. The soldiers, of course, relieved one another in this duty. Their prisoner was usually kept in their barracks, but sometimes allowed to reside in a private house under their charge. It was under this last species of custody that Paul was now placed by Felix. It is obvious that the centurion might render it more or less galling, according to his inclination, or the commands he had received. *F. W. Farrar,* in *The Life and Epistles of Paul.*

26. *He hoped that money would be given him of Paul.* To take bribes was in direct violation of the Roman law, but was in perfect accordance with the character of this unjust and avaricious judge. The Julian law, *De Repetundis,* expressly prohibited a judge from receiving anything for a person's imprisonment or liberation. Nor was Felix the only instance of a governor of Judea who was guilty of taking bribes. Albinus, one of his successors, on his departure from the province, freed all those prisoners who gave him money; "by which means" as Josephus remarks, "the prisons were indeed emptied, but the country was filled with robbers." *Paton J. Gloag,* in *Commentary on the Acts.*

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. On what two earlier occasions was Paul charged with disturbing the public peace? When was he charged with an offence against the religion of the Jews? What had Paul said before the Sanhedrin about the testimony of his conscience to his life? What was his purpose in coming to Jerusalem at this time? What was he doing in the temple which proved he still believed all things which are according to the law? Who had told Paul that they would hear him again concerning the resurrection and the judgment? Who in this city of Cæsarea sent for Peter and for what purpose? What was the result of Peter's message? Who used the expression "The Way", and what did it mean?

Paul Accused by Tertullus. Lysias had charged Paul's accusers to speak against him before Felix, and they were prompt to do so. The high priest Ananias with a deputation from the Sanhedrin came to Cæsarea within five days. Paul was summoned for trial, and Tertullus, the advocate whom the Jews had engaged, presented their case against him. After fulsome words of flattery for Felix, even expressing gratitude for his reforms, Tertullus accused "this pestilential fellow" of three things: inciting disturbances among the Jews throughout the Roman Empire, an offence against the Roman law; being the leader of the sect of the Nazarenes, an offence against the law of Moses; and defiling the temple, an offence against both the law of Moses and the Roman law, since the latter protected the Jews in their worship. When Tertullus had finished the deputation of Jews emphatically endorsed all that he had said.

Paul's Defence. Felix made a gesture signifying that Paul should make his defence, and Paul with calm dignity answered the charges. He began in a respectful manner, saying that he spoke with greater confidence because Felix was well acquainted with the state of affairs in his nation. That he was a disturber of the public peace he denied; it had been but twelve days since he came to Jerusalem for the very opposite purpose of worshipping there, investigation could be made and no proof of his enemies' charge could be found. That he belonged to the so-called sect of the Nazarenes he acknowledged, but he was not an apostate from the Jewish religion, for he served the same God, believed the law and the prophets, and believed in the resurrection of the just and unjust as did these Jews before him, and because of this belief he strove to have a clear conscience toward God and toward men. The charge of defiling the temple he denied; his purpose in going to Jerusalem had been to bring alms to his nation and offerings, and his enemies had found him carrying out a Jewish rite in the temple, with no crowd nor tumult, but there were certain Jews form Asia—enemies who ought to be here to make accusation if they found aught against him. Or let these men who are present say of what wrongdoing he was found guilty in the trial before the Council. It was because he had affirmed the resurrection of the dead that he was arraigned this day before the governor.

Paul Left in Prison. Felix, having, for a Roman a good knowledge of Christianity, saw that Paul was hated because he was a Christian, but he would not pronounce him innocent. He adjourned the trial, his pretext for not settling the matter being that he would await the coming of Lysias. He ordered the centurion to keep Paul a prisoner, but to grant him the privilege of seeing his friends and having them minister unto him.

Later, Felix sent for Paul to have him tell him and his wife Drusilla about the faith in Christ Jesus. Paul talked to him so effectively about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come that Felix trembled and sent him away, saying that when more convenient he would hear him again. Though Felix often sent for him after that, it was with the hope that Paul would bribe him to gain his freedom. Two years passed, and Felix was succeeded in office by Porcius Festus, but he left Paul in prison for the sake of gaining favor with the Jews.

What the Imprisonment did for Paul. "What was the apostle doing all that time?" questions Dr. G. H. Morrison. "We can not be certain that he wrote any epistles. Do you think he was fretting? Or mourning over his churches as he paced his prison? We may be absolutely certain he was doing nothing like that—he was growing and ripening in his own inward life. For twenty years he had been fighting, amid the excitement and stress of a glorious campaign. New views of Christ had been borne upon his heart; new aspects of the gospel had arrested him. He wanted leisure now to focus everything, and God bestowed that leisure at Cæsarea. Compare the letters that were written after these years, with the letters which were written before them. Note the richness and depth and glory of the later ones, their exaltation of the Lord Jesus Christ; their fresh insistence upon spiritual union, their recognition of the possibilities of sainthood; their method of bringing the most majestic doctrines to bear on the common duties of every day—and you will see what these two years did for Paul."

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

The trial was held in the Prætorium, "Herod's Palace", at Cæsarea, and there Paul was doubtless imprisoned. See page 176. A building on the mole now bears the name of "The prison of St. Paul"; it dates from the time of the Crusades.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Conscience is in part the faculty by means of which we discriminate between right and wrong. It is the judge sitting in the inner tribunal of the mind. The power to discriminate between what is right and wrong has to be carefully trained. Paul's conscience did not trouble him at all when he was persecuting the Christians—he verily thought then that he ought to persecute them. The true conscience also tells us that we ought to do what we have decided to be

right and makes us desire to do the highest that we know. The sense of "oughtness" has to be cultivated by exercise, and the power to carry out the right desire comes through the cultivation of the will. If the conscience is the judge, the will is the executive power. The training of the will to obey the behests of the conscience is of the utmost importance.

"The sunrise of the word ought" is a thought-compelling, pictorial phrase. It means the dawn in the consciousness of the sense of moral obligation. The sunrise had become high noon with Paul when he declared, "Herein I also exercise myself to have a conscience void of offense toward God and man always."

Drive home today the thought that it is possible for a human being so to honor his responsibility in the sight of God and his obligation to men as to have a conscience void of offense.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. In the ancient Greek and Roman courts it was customary to have a paid lawyer present a case, just as it is in courts of to-day. The lawyer on the side making a complaint against a prisoner began, then the lawyer for the prisoner replied. In this way each side was allowed two speeches, but the time of each was limited. We have heard in the Acts of many trials; in the trial of Paul before Felix at Cæsarea, we first hear of a paid lawyer. His name is Tertullus and he represents the Jews of Jerusalem who so fiercely hate Paul. You must begin your plea by praising the judge, was the rule in those days, and Tertullus does not forget this. What does he say of Felix? (Historical Background.)

For Older Pupils. When Agrippa I, King of Judea, died in 44 A. D., Judea was a Roman province, and its rulers, appointed by the Emperor, were called procurators. In 51 or later, the date is uncertain, Antonius Felix was appointed procurator. He had been born and brought up as the slave of Antonia, the mother of Claudius Cæsar, and is therefore called Antonius Felix, but because he received his freedom from Claudius he is sometimes called Claudius Felix. Felix "exercised the authority of a King with the spirit of a slave", says Tacitus in his History; and in his Annals he represents him as indulging in all kinds of cruelty and lawlessness. When Jonathan the high priest expostulated with him for his misrule, he had him assassinated in the temple by the Sicarrii. This is the man before whom Paul is now on trial, and the man by whom, Tertullus says, the Jews enjoy much peace and evils are corrected for this nation!

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I A Good Conscience

How Paul Gained his Clear Conscience. Paul says that the aim of his life has been to have a conscience at peace with God and man. He has exercised himself to have such a conscience. He has sought to attain it by rigid self discipline. Our words *ascetic* and *exercise* come from the same Greek word, which means literally *to practice gymnastics*. Because he had been an ascetic extremely rigid in self-denial, he could say that his conscience did not trouble him. Our word *conscience* comes from two Latin words that mean literally *knowing with*. I know nothing against myself, Paul says in 1 Cor. 4.4. His conscience did not accuse him of offence against God or men in this matter whereof he was accused, and to have such a conscience in all matters was the aim ever before him. Some one has said that conscience is like a sun-dial, when the truth shines on it, it points the right way, but it may be covered up so that no truth can fall on it, or false light may fall on it, and then it leads one astray. The owner of the sun-dial must see that it receives the true light, and so must the owner of the conscience. Paul's conscience was void of offence toward God when as Saul the Pharisee he persecuted the Christians. "I verily thought with myself", he said, "that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth". When he found that false light had been falling on his conscience he did not say that he would not trust it again, but he took the utmost pains to let the true light shine upon it, and then he trusted its guidance implicitly.

The Chiefest Concern. It is not that Paul professes a perfect attainment, but rather that he tells of the perfect aim which he seeks to realise—a conscience undefiled. To have an unoffended conscience is indeed the noblest and purest height of Christian manhood. There is no greater need in the Christian life than that of recognizing the place of conscience, and of cultivating a consideration of its demands at any cost.

In order to have a right understanding of its place in the life of the believer a simple consideration of its functions will be helpful. That which is called conscience is the faculty of common possession, upon which the Spirit of God projects the will of God. It is the organ of moral apprehension, by which we are enabled to discern betwixt right and wrong, betwixt duty and self-will. It is the organ, too, of moral judgment, mericlessly condemning the unworthy choice, the cowardly attitude, the sinful indulgence. Hence it is that the apostle speaks elsewhere of the "commendation of a pure conscience", and elsewhere again of the "condemnation of an evil conscience".

Just as faith sees God as grace, and, apprehending his gift, saves us, so conscience sees God as righteousness, and, apprehending his will, judges us. Thus it is that faith and conscience must work harmoniously if any life is ever to rise to the height of God's original intention and purpose. Some there are who lay all stress on the former, to the almost entire neglect of the latter, with the consequence that unworthy living discredits high profession. On the other hand, there are those who elevate conscience to the extent of excluding faith almost entirely, and are self-deceived in imagining that obedience to an unillumined conscience is the highest possible standard of life. For in reality faith is absolutely necessary to the full office of conscience. Conscience is limited in the sphere of its activities to this present life, while faith lays hold of that which is within the veil. Thus, since life and eternity are but parts of one whole existence, the two cannot be dissevered in actual Christian experience.

In this, his bold profession to Felix, Paul indicates the all-inclusive sphere over which conscience presides. It governs his relationship with the seen and the unseen, with the eternal and the temporal, toward God and man. It embraces both the heart's intention and the life's action, and in nothing is he exempt from the strenuous, personal endeavor to live according to its dictates, for he exercises himself in this direction "always". The humbler and higher activities of his life alike are thus governed, and indeed only so can holiness, which is the Christian calling, be attained. For let it be remembered that any disregard of conscience is unequivocally declared to be sin.

Of what does this exercise consist, and how may we learn it? In the first place, we must unceasingly practice immediate obedience to all new light. We must look upon all the spheres of life, upon all its relationships and duties, in the light of the will of God. We must allow the illumination of the ideal to fall unhindered upon the actual, and in the increasing clearer light we shall always see our own next step. But we must remember always that light received and not obeyed is apt to become darkness, and how great is the darkness of an outraged conscience! Further, there must be the practice of immediate confession with a view to cleansing, wherever failure is revealed from whatever cause. The heart must be "sprinkled from an evil conscience" continually, for only so can fellowship be maintained with him who is light and "in whom is no darkness at all".

It is by keeping short accounts with God in the matter of transgression, and by constant appropriation of the Blood which cleanseth, that the unoffended conscience is cultivated. And joined to these exercises must be the practice of merciless self-judgment. In view of my indebtedness I must continually judge my life toward God, and in view of my influence I must as continually judge it before men. While pitying always the frailties of others I must never excuse nor explain away my own shortcomings, if I would have constantly resting upon my life the transfiguring light of a conscience void of offence. And this is the joy which no man taketh away. *Condensed* from *"Redeeming Vision"* by *Dr. J. Stuart Holden.*

Furies upon the Sinner's Track. In one of his immortal dialogues Plato has shown that there is no escaping the penalty of sin and no possibility of peace until it be faced. The wrongdoer, he says, who is convicted and punished

is happier than one who gets off scotfree. And this is terribly true. A sinner may shun detection and never be brought before an earthly tribunal; but there is a more awful tribunal which he cannot escape. His sin grips him, and it never lets him go. It racks him ruthlessly, remorselessly, with a slow, dragging, bitter and ever more bitter torture. And there is no deliverance for him until he faces his sin and confesses it and accepts the consequences. You remember that grim imagination of Greek mythology, that no sooner was a crime wrought than the Furies, the bloodhounds of Hell, got on the sinner's track and hunted him day and night until he atoned with his own blood for the blood which he had shed. And what is this but a picturesque rendering of the stern law of moral retribution? Examples abound. Coleridge tells of an Italian assassin who fled from the scene of his crime and gained a secure refuge in Germany. The law could not reach him, but conscience arrested him. He was hunted by his victim's phantom until at length he could endure it no longer, and resolved to return to Rome and surrender himself to justice and expiate his crime on the scaffold. *Dr. David Smith,* in *Man's Need of God.*

A Lurking Evil. The other day I was walking down the street, and noticed that all the trees on one side of the avenue for several blocks were dead. They looked as if they had been fine, strong, healthy trees, and I could not understand why they had all died, until I was told that a gas-pipe beneath their roots had leaked, and that the escaping gas had killed the trees.

I am sure you and I know people who are like those dead trees: they have become discouraged and wilted; and if you and I could dig down into their lives we should probably find something like that poisonous gas which has ruined them.

Sin is the most poisonous thing that gets into one's life.

If a boy or girl has done wrong and is hiding it from his father and his mother, and his conscience is pricking him all the time, then he cannot be sunny and healthy like a growing tree. He becomes cross and easily provoked, and is sulky and wilted.

If you have done something wrong, which you ought to tell your parents about, do not go to sleep until you have told them. If you do, you will wake in the morning with dread, and you will go around all day with a dull ache which will spoil all the sunshine. *Howard J. Chidley,* in *Fifty-Two Story Talks.*

The Honest Heart.

The honest heart that's free frae a'
Intended fraud or guile,
However fortune kick the ba'
Has aye some cause to smile. *Burns.*

Some Untroubled Consciences. That a conscience may be void of offence, not because its possessor never does wrong, but because it has become hardened, is shown in this story of Laura E. Richards, published in "The Silver Crown".

The minister had just finished his great sermon. The air still quivered with his burning words, and the people sat erect, disturbed, embarrassed; yet still he lingered a moment in his place.

"Is there", he asked, "one here in whose breast these words strike like a barbed arrow, for the truth that is in them?" and he sat down.

"That was hard on John", said old James; "but he deserves it, every word."

"A blow from the shoulder for James", said old John; "time he got one, too, if it is not too late."

"I wonder if either of those two old sinners will take his medicine and be helped by it", said old William.

But the little saint, the little saint, hurried home, and knelt by her little bed, and cried aloud in her anguish: "My God, my God, have mercy on me, and give me for this stone a heart of flesh!"

Troubled Consciences. A football player recently was ruled out of the game for slugging. A little later a man was sent out from the side lines to take the place of another player. This new substitute's face was almost covered with strips of adhesive plaster. It was noticed that this new man played with special skill, and it was later discovered that this fellow whose face was so well covered was the one who had been disqualified.

Sharp practice of this sort might in a certain period of the past have been

ignored and even considered praiseworthy. What happened in this case, however, shows that that time is gone. As soon as the fact was discovered, an investigation by the athletic authorities of the institution which the disqualified player represented was at once begun. It was discovered that the captain of the team was disabled for the time being and did not know what had happened, and that the student manager of the team was in the field house. The coach of the team, however, not only knew of it and acknowledged it, but said that he was responsible for it, and justified himself because it accorded with his standards as a professional. The Athletic Committee, consisting of three members of the Faculty, acting in conjunction with the Student Council, immediately dismissed the coach. The big game of the year was yet to be played—the game with Rutgers; but there was no hesitation on the part of the authorities or the representative undergraduates in this action. This happened at Stevens Institute, the well-known technical college at Hoboken, New Jersey. The undergraduate paper, in the course of its comment on the game, had this to say under the title "A Protest":

Stevens may not be able to have a winning football team. She may not be able to have many victories in lacrosse, baseball, or track, or be rated as a power in the college athletic world. But there is one thing Stevens can have, has had, and, it is to be hoped, always will have as long as the red and gray is worn—clean athletics.

The account as here given is from an editorial in *The Outlook,* where this comment is added. The occurrence has been of the greatest credit to Stevens Institute. Minor matters these, perhaps, from one point of view, in the news of the day; but they are really not minor in any real sense. The men who follow sharp practice in athletics are the men who are willing to escape moral obligations in business provided they can avoid legal compulsion, who turn sharp political tricks provided they can do so without penalty, and who make of treaties "scraps of paper". The men who follow the other practice, illustrated by the undergraduates and authorities at Stevens, are the men on whom must depend business confidence and business morals, from whom alone the country can expect any progress in political honesty and public service, and to whom the world has to look for the substitution of international confidence and co-operation in place of war.

II The Peril of To-Morrow

Two Men of Cæsarea. Twice in this same city of Cæsarea was a man of God sent for to explain about the faith in Christ Jesus, but wholly different were the two results. Cornelius sent for Peter, and when he had come the Roman centurion bade him speak "all things that have been commanded thee of the Lord". And when Peter had finished his message, Cornelius and those with him "magnified God". "Can any man forbid the water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Spirit as well as we?" questioned Peter, amazed and glad. Felix sent for Paul, and the Roman governor trembled as he listened, but he did not magnify God; he sent his messenger away and said he would call him again when he found a convenient season. The impression made on his guilty conscience was soon lost, and we do not hear that it ever returned. The convenient season came not. He decided his own fate when he fought against the impression and put the matter out of his mind.

Dr. J. A. Scherer describes the character of Felix as that of "a creature of impulse and emotional passion; strong where his own selfish feelings were concerned, as he proved by his shameless union with Drusilla, yet in pure will-power a simple imbecile. The shilly-shally of cowardly delay stands out in his dealings with Paul. 'I will hear all you have to say as soon as your accusers have arrived'; 'When Lysias, the commanding officer, comes down, I will give my decision in your case'; 'Go for the present, but, when I find an opportunity, I will send for you again'—there you have the unconscious self-revelation of this will-forsaken, dilatory character".

The Heart may Become Hardened. Every appeal to the conscience that is put aside makes the next appeal less likely to succeed. You fire a shell against an earthwork; that brings down the face of the earthwork and makes debris which guards the core of it against the next shell.

Every base choice makes subsequent noble choices less likely. Every time that a man is brought into contact with Jesus Christ, and fails to yield full obedience and trust, that man is less likely ever to yield. Something the giving of the sop to Judas did. If it did not melt, it hardened. There is no ice so tough, so slippery, as ice which is melted on the surface by the few hours of the winter's sun, and then locked again in the bonds of the frost when night falls. Half-melted hearts frozen again are frozen harder than ever. *Alexander Maclaren.*

To-Morrow is No Time. To-morrow is the most wonderful of days, or, as Isaiah has it, "a day great beyond measure". It is the day when every man does his duty. It is the harvest time of good intentions. To-morrow bad habits will be resolutely overcome, evil tempers conquered. To-morrow countless numbers of people will heed the call of Christ. To-morrow they will follow him and they will give themselves wholly to his service, they will put forth unsparing effort, they will make willing and joyous sacrifices, they will stand boldly for the right though the heavens fall, they will ally themselves with the Christian Church, they will—but the vision enlarges itself beyond the power of expression. *George H. Hubbard.*

The Morrow may not be Yours. One-fourth of the human race dies before reaching the seventh year, one-half before the seventeenth year. Out of one hundred persons only six live to be sixty years old. Out of five hundred only one lives to be eighty years old. Is it safe to put off deciding the greatest of all questions till a more convenient season?

One Sunday night in Chicago Dwight L. Moody chose for his text, "What shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?" and his closing words to his great congregation were: "I wish you would take this text home with you and turn it over in your minds during the week, and next Sunday we will decide what to do with Jesus of Nazareth". That night the great fire broke out and many of his audience perished. Mr. Moody never forgot the impression thus made upon him of the lost opportunity, and in all his work afterwards he never said, "We will decide next week", but rather, "We must each decide now."

III Neither Can they Prove the Things whereof they Accuse Me

Ye ken Naething aboot it. The work of missionaries has been greatly hindered, not only by persecutions from the people for whom they have been working, but also by false charges and criticism by the "home churches". Livingstone felt the injustice of such charges and gave the reason why they were made. "We are working hard", he wrote in a letter to his mother, "at what some can see at a glance the importance of, while to others we appear following after the glory of discovering lakes, mountains, jenny-nettles and puddock-stools. In reference to these people I always remember a story told me by the late Dr. Philip with great glee. When a young minister in Aberdeen, he visited an old woman in affliction, and began to talk very fair to her on the duty of resignation, trusting, hoping, and all the rest of it, when the old woman looked up into his face and said, 'Puir thing, ye ken naething aboot it'. This is just what I say to those who set themselves up to judge another man's servant."

The Charge that Missionaries are Inferior People. There is a notion that foreign missionaries are generally men of inferior caliber. Prejudice, this notion is, but, like all prejudice, it has some cause. As one corrupt politician will do more to bring politics into disrepute than a dozen honest ones can do to redeem it; as one pettifogger can do more to give an evil reputation to the legal profession than a score of high-minded lawyers can do to efface that impression; so one uncultivated, unvigorous, sentimental, narrow-minded man in the missionary service can bring that service into a disrepute, and produce an impression of inefficiency that a score of broad-minded statesmanlike men can not counteract. *Lyman Abbott,* in *The Outlook.*

I have investigated the criticisms of missionaries wherever possible, and am bound to say that, as a whole, these men and women are of a higher grade even than the ministry at home, and to say that their converts are not genuine is simply to betray a lack of knowledge or a surplus of prejudice. *W. T. Ellis.*

The Charge that Missionaries Live in Luxury. It is to be hoped that the

coarse and shallow criticisms which from time to time have gained circulation in America touching the ease and luxury of missionary households henceforth may be discredited. After having been permitted to sojourn in the homes of scores of missionaries in all parts of India, in Ceylon, and in Japan, it is an honor to testify that there has been observed only that which illustrates good sense, the consecrated use of opportunity, and wise and helpful self-adjustment to the environment. *Charles Cuthbert Hall.*

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

It is a solemn thing to say *to-morrow* when God says *to-day*, for man's to-morrow and God's to-day never meet, says Duncan Mathieson. The word that comes from the eternal throne is "now" and it is a man's own choice that fixes his doom. Now is the acceptable time; now is the day of salvation. In the words of Dr. Maclaren: I beseech you to cherish every faint impression that is being made upon your hearts and consciences. Let it lead you to Christ; and take him for your Lord and Savior now. You will never want Jesus Christ more than you do today. Why should you postpone possessing the purest joy, the highest blessing, the divinest strength? Why should you put off welcoming your best Friend into your heart? Do not delay, because delay is decision in the wrong way; do not delay, because there is no reason for delay; do not delay, because delay robs you of a larger blessing; do not delay, because delays lay up for you, if ever you come back, bitter memories; do not delay, because delay may end in death. And for all these reasons, come as a sinful soul, and follow in his footsteps, and do it now! Today, if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

Our Prayer. O Lord our God, we are humbled before thee as we think of Paul's perfect aim, to have a conscience void of offence toward thee and men always. But we are encouraged also, as we think that even that mighty servant of thine had to exercise himself in order to receive this great reward from thee, the witness of a mind content, a conscience clear. Revive thy work in our hearts, O God; help us to keep Paul's perfect aim ever before us, keep us steadfast in the exercising of ourselves towards its attainment, and to thee we shall give the glory.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Were belief in the resurrection and judgment taken away, to what extent would this be a moral world?
2. The courage of innocence.
3. The missionary and his critic. See the Third Topic; article by A. J. Brown in the *Missionary Review of the World,* April and May, 1907.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. What happened in Cæsarea during Paul's imprisonment which resulted in the removal of Felix from office? (*Guide,* p. 394.) 2. Who was Festus? 3. Find three statements in this chapter which show Festus' promptness of action. 4. What reason for the answer made by Festus to the Jews' request is given in verse 16? 5. Who was the Cæsar at this time? (*Guide,* p. 393.) 6. Who constituted Festus's "council", and why did he confer with them in this case? (*Guide,* p. 393.) 7. Give Festus's account of the proceedings at Cæsarea. (Acts 25.14-21, 24-25.)

Questions to Think About. 1. What plot is recalled by the favor asked, verse 3? 2. In what sense was Paul at Cæsarea "standing before Cæsar's judgment-seat?" (*Guide,* p. 393.) 3. What did the appeal unto Cæsar mean for Paul? 4. Why did he make it? 5. Paul had often prayed that he might go to Rome; why? 6. How did he expect his prayer would be answered? 7. How was it answered? 8. Was the way in which he went to Rome better for the interests he had at heart than the way he planned to go? (Phil. 1.12.) 9. Is prayer answered? 10. Is it always answered in the way we expect? 11. Is a refusal to grant a petition an answer? 12. Do we know what is best for ourselves and others? 13. Should prayer consist mainly of petitions?

Memory and Note-Book Work. Commit to memory the stanza on p. 397. Write Chapter XVII, Paul before Felix.

THE APPEAL TO CÆSAR

Golden Text

It is enough for the disciple that he be as his teacher, and the servant as his lord. Matthew 10.25

LESSON Acts 25: verses 1-12 printed MEMORIZE verses 10, 11

1 Festus therefore, having come into the province, after three days went up to Jerusalem from Cæsarea. 2 And the chief priests and the principal men of the Jews informed him against Paul; and they besought him, 3 asking a favor against him, that he would send for him to Jerusalem; laying a plot to kill him on the way. 4 Howbeit Festus answered, that Paul was kept in charge at Cæsarea, and that he himself was about to depart *thither* shortly. 5 Let them therefore, saith he, that are of power among you go down with me, and if there is anything amiss in the man, let them accuse him.

6 And when he had tarried among them not more than eight or ten days, he went down unto Cæsarea; and on the morrow he sat on the judgment-seat, and commanded Paul to be brought. 7 And when he was come, the Jews that had come down from Jerusalem stood round about him, bringing against him many and grievous charges which they could not prove; 8 while Paul said in his defence, Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor against Cæsar, have I sinned at all. 9 But Festus, desiring to gain favor with the Jews, answered Paul and said, Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things before me? 10 But Paul said, I am standing before Cæsar's judgment-seat, where I ought to be judged: to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou also very well knowest. 11 If then I am a wrong-doer, and have committed anything worthy of death, I refuse not to die; but if none of those things is *true* whereof these accuse me, no man can give me up unto them. I appeal unto Cæsar. 12 Then Festus, when he had conferred with the council, answered, Thou hast appealed unto Cæsar: unto Cæsar shalt thou go.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

I. A Plot to Kill Paul. 1-5.
  1. A Favor Asked by the Jews. 1-3.
  2. Festus's Reply. 4, 5.
II. Paul before Festus. 6-12.
  1. Accused by the Jews. 6, 7.
  2. Defence and Appeal to Cæsar. 8-11.
  3. Appeal Granted. 12.

1. *Festus.* See the Historical Background.—*Into the province.* Judea was a part of the province of Syria; alone, it was called a procuratorship.—*Went up to Jerusalem.* To confer with the Jewish authorities.—*From Cæsarea.* The military headquarters of the Roman governor.

2. *The chief priests and the principal men of the Jews.* The leaders of the Sanhedrin. The high priest was now Ishmael, the son of Phali, the successor of Ananias.

3. *Asking a favor against him.* They did not ask for justice, but for partiality; they requested the governor to ingratiate himself in their good will by doing what they wished, right or wrong.—*Laying a plot to kill him on the way.* Evidently their plans for seizing and killing him had already been laid, as in Acts 23.12-15. The land was full of assassins ready to be hired. Dr. Watkinson observes that the "more than forty" who joined in the conspiracy to kill Paul must by this time have become very hungry (!), and we need not wonder at their machinations. They seemed to think that if they could only kill Paul, Christianity would disappear.

5. *Them that are of power among you.* Your influential men.

7. *Many and grievous charges which they could not prove.* Recall Tertullus's charges, last lesson.

9. *Desiring to gain favor with the Jews.* The Greek words mean literally "to lay up favor as a deposit", that is, to put under an obligation. Festus's attitude toward the Jews was like that of some modern politicians who want to be returned to office, and therefore must keep in the good graces of their constituencies: Festus's subjects had the right to complain of him, or to commend him, to the Emperor at the expiration of his term of office. He showed in his willingness to send Paul back to the Sanhedrin a stronger desire to curry favor with the Jews than Felix had shown.—*Wilt thou go up to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things before me?* Festus, would, in that case, have been present and in that sense the trial would have been before him, but the trial would have been conducted by the Sanhedrin. Dean Alford thinks that Festus anticipated Paul's answer, and only asked his question in order to convince the Jews that he himself was willing to hand Paul over to them.

10. *I am standing before Cæsar's judgment-seat.* Festus's judgment-seat, before which he was standing, was Cæsar's, because he was Cæsar's representative. "To stand before Cæsar brings no tremor to the man who has learned to stand before Heaven. He whose soul is constantly bowed before God can well be bold before all men. He fears man little, just because he fears God much" (*Holden*).—*Where I ought to be judged.* And not before the Jewish Sanhedrin at Jerusalem.—*As thou also very well knowest.* And therefore should not have asked me to go before a Jewish tribunal.

11. *I appeal unto Cæsar.* Cæsarem Appello, I appeal unto Cæsar, was a word that suspended all further proceedings. See below. The Cæsar, or Roman emperor, at this time was Nero.

12. *When he had conferred with the council.* The officials and advisers who formed his court. There were a few cases in which the right of appeal was disallowed; a bandit or a pirate, for example, taken in the act, might be condemned and executed by the Proconsul, notwithstanding his appeal to the Emperor. Accordingly Festus conferred with his council. But no doubt could be entertained on this head; and he immediately pronounced the decision of the Court" (*Conybeare and Howson*).

Nero, to Whom Paul Appealed

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

11. *I appeal unto Cæsar.* Although Jews had appealed against Roman officers, this was the first time a Jew had appealed to the highest court of the realm against other Jews. Unless the prisoner were proved guilty of brigandage or sedition, the provincial government had no choice in the matter, the prisoner must be sent on to Rome for trial. Meanwhile, he must be well-treated, as if uncondemned. Professor Ramsay points out that there has always been one law for the rich and another for the poor, that many claims can be successfully pushed by a rich man where a poor man would have no chance of success, and his opinion is that the citizen's right of appeal to the Emperor was hedged in by fees and pledges, and that Paul was choosing an expensive kind of trial. But Paul had weighed the cost; he had reckoned the gain which would accrue to the Church if the supreme court pronounced in his favor; and his past experience gave him every reason to hope for a favorable issue before a purely Roman tribunal, where Jewish influence would have little or no power.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. What was the first time that Paul had made a defence after his arrest? What was the second time? What was the third time? How far was Cæsarea from Jerusalem? Who were the principal men of the Jews? What plot had the "more than forty" laid to put Paul to death before he was taken to Cæsarea? What had Felix done in order to gain favor among the Jews?

Felix is Deposed. The reasons why Felix' rule was so short are given by Conybeare and Howson. The political situation in Judea grew more embarassing. The exasperation of the people under the mal-administration of Felix became increasingly implacable. It was during Paul's two years' imprisonment that such serious disturbances took place in the streets of Cæsarea between the Jewish and Gentile population, that the troops were called out, and slaughter resulted. The troops, which were chiefly recruited in the province, fraternized with the Gentile population, while the Jews trusted chiefly to the influence of wealth. In the end Felix was summoned to Rome, and the Jews followed with their accusations. Thus it was that he was anxious, even at his departure, "to confer obligations upon them" (Acts 24.27), and one effort to diminish his unpopularity was "to leave Paul in bonds". In so doing, he doubtless violated the law, and trifled with the rights of a Roman citizen; but the favor of the provincial Jews he needed, and the Christians were weak in comparison with them; nor were such delays in the administration of justice unprecedented, either at Rome or in the provinces. Nero deposed Felix and appointed Festus.

The New Procurator. Felix was succeeded by Festus, who was a more honorable man. One interesting event of his rule was his troubles over a high wall which the Jews built so that Agrippa, the proconsul, could not look into the temple courts from his palace windows. The wall hid the courts also from the guard stationed in the Tower of Antonia during the festivals. Festus agreed with Agrippa that the wall must come down, but he allowed the Jews to carry the matter to Rome, and through the influence of Nero's wife they won their case.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Our thought today lies in our Golden Text: It is enough for the disciple that he be as his teacher. Paul was like his Teacher, in the lesson of today, in enduring unjust charges, and being at the mercy of unjust judges. He was like him, however, in so many other things that it would be difficult to name them all. Do your pupils find you in your measure like the Great Teacher?

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. What is our Golden Text? What does it mean? Who is the hero of our lessons? The Golden Text must apply to him or it would not have been chosen today. What experiences has Paul already had that were like Jesus? How was Jesus received by the people of his day? How was his message received? Have Paul's experiences been similar? There are many similarities between the trials of Jesus and of his servants; let us look for them.

For Older Pupils. Felix has shuffled off his responsibility concerning Paul. How? Who is the new procurator? What sort of man is he? How does he compare with Felix in dilatoriness? In strength of will? Some one has said that Festus presents a noble figure by comparison with Felix, the nerveless polyp, that his brusque activity is most welcome after the dilatory laxity of Felix. How soon after his arrival at the seat of government did he go to Jerusalem to learn the situation among the leaders of the people?

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Favoritism Versus Justice

What the Jews asked of their Rulers. Felix, desiring to gain favor with the Jews, left Paul in bonds. Felix well knew that justice demanded Paul's release, but what cared he for justice as long as there might be a chance of his placating the Jews by an act of injustice? His efforts in his own behalf failed, but they gave the chief Jews confidence to believe that the next ruler would be equally amenable to their wishes, and they boldly asked Festus as a favor to them to send Paul to Jerusalem so that they might kill him on the way. Festus, too, desired to gain favor with the Jews (verse 9), but he was unwilling to pervert justice to the extent they wished. To show favoritism rather than to enact justice was very common in those days. It is not wholly unknown today.

What a Congregation sometimes Asks of their Pastor. Woe to that preacher who does not keep within his breast an incorruptible conscience, whose vision of God is clouded by unworthy fear of his audience, and whose self-respect is undermined by unmanly compromises and surrenders to placate wealthy or influential patrons! Everybody knows the temptation to substitute for the high and difficult vocation of a prophet of truth, the amiable ambition to please a congregation. Many well-meaning ministers have spent weary years cajoling and flattering their people, softening down the rebukes of the Gospel, and lining Christ's hard sayings with velvet till the most touchy consciences in the pews of Christendom can come in contact with them without a shock. It might seem as if some preachers had laid down as a law for themselves to make nobody uncomfortable whose income was more than $1,000 a year. *Charles S. Horne,* in *The Romance of Preaching.*

Where Self-Favoritism Interferes with Justice. In a recent book the need of church work in civic morals is illustrated by this description of a type of man so common that almost any reader, it is affirmed, can recall some acquaintance like him. A certain man in an enlightened city is a promising citizen and a leading member of a great church which has a brilliant minister. The man is prominent in public and private business life, and also in social life, and for many years has been a member of this church. If drawn into a friendly yet earnest discussion in regard to the possibility of raising the standard of individual morals and true fellowship, by developing a high sense of public duty, this man would smile and say that when his pocketbook was affected his civic pride and honor had to step aside. He would further say that none of his acquaintances differed from him in this regard, and would intimate that, if any man is really different at this state of human progress, that man must be one lacking in judgment.

II Prayer Fulfilled in Unexpected Ways

Paul's Prayer Experience. Paul was a man of prayer. He prayed earnestly and without ceasing that his thorn in the flesh might be removed, and the answer was, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my power is made perfect in weakness". The thorn, whatever it was, remained to buffet Paul, but his prayer was heard and answered, till, strong in the power from on high, he could say, "Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my weakness, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For when I am weak, then am I strong". His prayer was not answered in the way he asked, but a far greater blessing than he had asked for came—enduring strength, the sense of a triumphant God working in and through his weakness.

The disciple was as his teacher, the servant as his Lord, even in his prayer experience. Recall the scene in Gethsemane and the words of Jesus' prayer. The answer which Jesus received is beautifully described by a mosaic in St. Mark's, Venice. There he is represented first prone on the ground, the sky all black. Next he has raised himself a little, and there is a strip of blue in one corner of the sky. And in the last scene he is kneeling with face uplifted, a radiant beam striking full upon him, and standing by his side is the strengthening angel.

I must see Rome, Paul had said. Long had he hoped and prayed that he might preach the gospel there, but the way had not opened for him in answer to his prayer. At last, after a long imprisonment at Cæsarea he made his appeal to Cæsar. And then, after a long and perilous sea journey, he reached Rome a prisoner. That was God's answer to his prayer. And what is Paul's testimony? "Now I would have you know, brethren," he wrote to the Philippians, "that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the progress of the gospel; so that my bonds became manifest in Christ throughout the whole prætorian guard, and to all the rest." And how infinitely better was God's answer than his prayer, for the letters which his imprisonment at Rome gave him opportunity to write have carried his message to all lands and ages!

God Answers in His Own Way. We can believe that a true prayer will be heard. We can believe that it will be answered. We can not believe that it will always or often be answered in our way; the answer often comes from a quarter least expected. "We fix our gaze on a particular part of the horizon, nothing doubting but that the cloud no bigger than a man's hand will appear in

that quarter, and grow larger with blessings to be poured down upon our heads," says Dr. Hugh Macmillan, "and while we mourn that the sky in that direction continues as brass, we never notice that in the opposite direction the heavens are clouding over and there is the sound of abundance of rain. Though not in the direction from which we desired, the blessing will come; and perhaps it will be all the richer and more suitable for that reason."

This truth was once brought forcibly home to the heart of one who believed in prayer. Sickness in the home made it necessary for her to give music lessons, but the household expenses increased faster than she could pay them. She prayed earnestly that she might have more pupils. As she was walking wearily home one day, too poor to spend five cents on car fare, she heard the sound of music in a music store and went in to listen and rest. After several people had played a man came to her and said it was now her turn. She did not understand why she was asked to play, but she loved music and something impelled her to take the proffered seat and throw her whole heart into her playing. When she had finished "Schubert's Serenade" she was asked to play again, and then a sheet of music was placed before her that she might accompany a singer. "The place is yours," smilingly exclaimed the gentleman who had asked her to play. Explanations followed, and she went away with a very happy heart, for she had accepted a position as piano player for the music store at a salary four or five times as large as she could possibly have from giving music lessons. Her prayer was answered in a far better way than she had asked.

"We pray in the letter; God answers in the spirit.
Why doth our prayer its answer not behold?
Man asks in copper and God grants in gold."

"No" and "Not Now" are Answers to Prayer. How many people think that to pray means to bring their wishes to God, and try to coax him to make them his wishes! Why, half the shallow, sceptical talk of the generation about the worthlessness of prayer goes upon that fundamental fallacy that the notion of prayer is to dictate terms to God, and that unless a man gets his wishes answered he has no right to suppose that his prayers are answered. But it is not so. That is a poor kind of prayer of which the inmost spirit is resistance to a clear dictate of the divine will; but the true prayer is, "O that I may be willing to take what thou art willing, in thy mercy and love, to send!"

I believe in importunate prayer, but I believe also that a great deal of what calls itself importunate prayer is nothing more than an obstinate determination not to be satisfied with what satisfies God. If a man has been bringing his wishes—and he cannot but have such—continuously to God, with regard to any outward things, and these have not been answered, he needs to look very carefully into his own temper and heart in order to make sure that what seems to be waiting upon God in importunate petition is not pestering him with refused desires. To make a prayer out of my rebellion against his will is surely the greatest abuse of prayer that can be conceived. *Dr. Alexander Maclaren,* in *Regions Beyond.*

God Knows Best. When the Prince of Orange came over to deliver our fathers from the tyranny of King James, he designed to land at one point of the coast, but was driven past it by stress of weather. It seemed as though his plan had miscarried. And so, indeed, it had, but the reason was that God had *his* plan, and he would carry it out. Had the Prince come to land where he had purposed, he would have found the royal troops waiting to receive him, and his enterprise would have been frustrated ere it was well begun. And therefore a watchful Providence interposed and conveyed him to another place where he encountered no opposition. God knows best, and when he overrules our purposes and disappoints our desires, it becomes us to acquiesce reverently and trustfully and take the way which he opens before us. His is ever the right way. *Professor David Smith,* in *Man's Need of God.*

Sudden Answers to Prayers are often Unexpected. One reason we do not pray better, I suppose, is that we are afraid of being answered. It is a very serious thing to pray; because we may be taken at our word. We must consent that God should order the answer. For instance: I pray in the morning that God will make me very useful today; it is a hazardous prayer. I may be taken at my word. Within an hour I may be called to very great usefulness, which will

take a hundred dollars from my bank account. Now, if I don't want to take that money, if it is called for, I have made a mistake in my prayer. Let us say what we mean. *Alexander MacKenzie.*

God answers sharp and sudden on some prayers,
And thrusts the thing we have prayed for in our face,
A gauntlet with a gift in 't. *Browning.*

God's Answers.

I prayed; God answered me at once,
And richly was I blessed;
Exactly as my heart had hoped
He granted my request.

I prayed; the answer long deferred
Brought not the thing I sought;
He answered better than my plea,
Ay, better than my thought.

I prayed; He gave no answer then,
Nor yet doth answer give;
But calm and confident I wait
His boon superlative. *Philip B. Strong.*

The Lesson Which the Little Child Must Learn. Bertha Gerneaux Woods, writing in the *Mother's Magazine,* gives this experience. A thoughtful four-year-old boy came to his mother and declared that he "didn't believe in Jesus any more."

"Why, Jimmy darling, what do you mean?" asked the shocked mother.

"Well, mamma, you told me Jesus could do anything. So I put a little box on the door-step last night, and I asked Jesus to take it up into the air, so's I could see him do it. And he didn't! And I asked him again this morning—and he didn't do it!" It was said with almost tragic emphasis, and the startled mother had to explain as best she could why such prayers cannot expect an answer. It was not a very easy matter—she had always before laid such emphasis upon the necessity for faith, the confident believing that the prayer would be answered. She had not anticipated such a literal application of her teaching.

"But I managed at last to satisfy him," she told me afterwards, with a rather troubled smile, "to make him see how we could not expect God to answer such a prayer—why it was not right to demand such miraculous demonstrations. But it took a good while. I am glad he came to me about his perplexity, though; it made me realize how faulty all my teaching about prayer had been. Now he is as devout a little believer again as even I could wish him to be, and he prays as fervently as he did before, but I feel he is no longer in danger of becoming a little sceptic if his requests are not answered in the way he asks."

III The Servant as his Lord

Paul a Noble Follower of his Lord. Throughout all the four occasions on which Paul defended himself against false accusations, he did what Christ in our Golden Text said was enough, he was a disciple as his Teacher, a servant as his Lord. In meekness that was not weakness, in dignity that was without pride, in courage that was not reliance upon self, he resembled the One whose he was and whom he served.

And throughout all his life Paul followed closely in the steps of the beloved and Divine Master. Mr. J. S. Greenough describes Paul as "so brave, so pitiful, so full of soldierly daring and motherly tenderness, so humble and yet so dignified, so courteous to the lowly, so fearless and independent before the great, so sternly moral and yet so sympathetic, so self-forgetful withal, that the feeblest saint or guiltiest sinner was almost dearer to him than his own life." And he adds: "It seemed as if, when Christ left the world, he determined to leave behind this brave and beautiful image of himself, this servant and follower who embodied in his noble life all that his Master had taught and been; and who proved, by the very magnificence of his tearful and lowly service how omnipotent the ascended Christ was in reproducing himself in his followers."

The Grand Idea in the Master's Mind. The disciple is to be as his Master—a Christ on a smaller scale. He was the Light of the world; they also are to shine as lights in the world. He is called the Word of God, and each one of them is to be, by his walk and conduct, a word of God. They are all to be copies of him, reproductions of his beauty; lesser incarnations of God, as he was the great Incarnation, so that the world, in beholding them, shall always be reminded of the invisible Christ. St. Paul was only repeating here the words with which our Lord himself has made us familiar. He defined discipleship by the words "salt" and "light". Each of his followers was to be a centre of illumination, a moral fountain, a well-spring of sweetness, a savor of life and health to the multitude around. They were to form a moral aristocracy. Their righteousness was to exceed all the recognized righteousness of the times. Their purity and justice, charity and patience, were to be distinctly higher than anything else which could be found in the world or had been known in the past. His purpose was to produce in his immediate followers, and to perpetuate in the Church when he had departed, a stronger, nobler, and lovelier type of manhood than the world had heretofore seen, and by means of this to convince the world of his divine authority and power. The world was to believe that he had risen from the dead by witnessing the exalted lives of his followers, and their moral and spiritual qualities were to be the one sufficient proof that his saving and sanctifying power abideth for ever. That was the grand idea in the Master's mind. *J. G. Greenhough,* in *The Mind of Christ in St. Paul.*

It is Enough for the Disciple that he be as his Teacher. "If they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more them of his household?" Surely many disciples cannot be taking this lesson home, else they would not be so full of amazed dejection, and even of rebellion, under the weight of their cross, as they often are.

You complain, perhaps, of your low position in life. You had no good start, your early advantages were miserably few, your career was heavily handicapped from the very first. But were you really born lower down than your Master was, when he, the Crown and Glory of heaven, humbled himself as no angel ever did, and was born among the beasts of burden in the stable of an inn?

You complain, perhaps, of the hard usage you have to endure at the hands of other men. But can your life-lot compare for a moment in this respect with the life-lot of your Lord? Occasionally men did seem to honor him, but when they crowded round him it was only to get, and not to give. Rich men, now and then, asked him to a feast, but not to show any love to him, only to gratify their own self-importance; for as Christ clearly saw, beneath the mask of hospitality there was only a poor curiosity or patronizing pride. He subsisted for years on the charity of a few who "ministered to him of their substance"; he spoke of himself as being less home-nurtured than the foxes of the desert or the fowls of the air; and yet he made no complaint. He took all that as the lot appointed for him, and accepted it unmurmuringly as his Father's will. Can you put the Master's experience alongside of your own, and say, "I am worse off than my Redeemer was"?

Do you say, "There are sufferings in my lot far harder to bear than these; studied insults, slanders and affronts, the venomed shafts of malicious tongues accusing me secretly of what I know to be absolutely false"? Well, how was it with Christ? Is there anything that can try the tempter which he had not to endure? His purest motives were wilfully misconstrued. His gracious miracles of love were ascribed to the power of the devil. He was calumniated as a revolutionary and a blasphemer. He was slandered as a glutton and a drunkard. The most contumelious epithets were hurled at him day after day. And yet no word of anger escaped his lips when treated so. He did not even say, either to accuser or to disciple, that it was very hard he should have such things to bear. He calmly accepted the shame, and "committed himself to him who judgeth righteously". *Dr. G. H. Knight,* in *In the Cloudy and Dark Day.*

In Manchuria. "In one place a man was found unable to leave his bed, having been beaten nigh to death because he had followed the new faith, but he said to Mr. Douglass, 'Is it not enough for the disciple, pastor, to be like his Master?' One of this man's daughters came forward for baptism; she was asked, 'What if you should have to suffer like your father?' and her quick reply was, 'Has not our Lord said, Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your

reward in heaven?' When converts are made of such stuff as this, it is no wonder that the kingdom advances."

Like Christ. Recently I was told a simple incident of one of the great Christian men of our generation. He was at the head of one of the largest concerns of our country employing thousands of men but never knowing any labor troubles. This incident was told by his son. The two were on the train together. The father rose and went forward to another part of the train. As he went a man sitting opposite came over and spoke to the son. His flashy manner of dress and the fact that he seemed to have been drinking suggested the sort of man he was. He said to the son: "Wasn't that Mr. —?" "Yes," the son replied. "Well," the man said, as though talking half to himself, "if there were more men like him there'd be fewer like me." And he turned to his seat and sat as though absorbed in his thought. The son in speaking of it after his father's death, said it was one of the tenderest memories he had of his father. The common crowd of the street and our Lord Jesus are united in one thing, they want more men like Jesus our Saviour, then there'd be fewer of the other sort. *Dr. S. D. Gordon,* in *The Crowned Christ.*

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

There is moral strength in a clear conscience which can never be measured, but which enables the servant of Christ to face the untoward consequences of his faithfulness to the Lord without flinching. Such an one sees only in the necessity of standing before Cæsar an opportunity of further testifying to the Saviour whose he is. *J. Stuart Holden.*

Our Prayer. Our Father, we thank thee for the privilege of prayer, and for the knowledge that thou answerest our petitions not in the way that we think is best but in the way that thou knowest is best, even sending us to Rome in bonds, if need be, to accomplish thy ends for us. Wisely dost thou overrule all things, working in larger spheres than our thoughts can compass. Keep us true to Christ our Great Example, ever seeking to honor him and serve him in all that we do.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. For what one may pray and what answer one may expect. See the Second Topic.
2. Favoritism at Court. See the First Topic.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. Why was Paul asked to defend himself before Agrippa? (Acts 25.26, 27.) 2. When before had a ruler of Judea sought to shift responsibility by having a Herod examine his prisoner? (Lk. 23.7-12.) 3. Who were present at the hearing besides Agrippa? 4. What did Paul say was the real cause of the enmity of the Jews? (Acts 26.20, 21.) 5. What was Paul's commission? (Acts 26.16-18.) 6. What did he preach? (Acts 26.20, 22, 23.) 7. What impression did Paul's speech make on Festus? (Acts 26.24.) 8. On Agrippa? (Acts 26.28.) 9. When was Jesus accused of being mad? (Mk. 3. 21; Jn. 10.20.) 10. How are Agrippa's words in verse 28 given in the Authorized Version? 11. How many times did Pilate declare Jesus guiltless of the charge made by the Jews? (Lk. 23.4, 14, 22.) 12. By whom was Paul declared innocent of the charges against him? (Acts 23.29; 25.25; 26.31, 32.) 13. Why did each one fail to acquit him? (Acts 24.27; 25.9; 26.32.)

Questions to Think About. 1. Why do you suppose Agrippa wished to see Paul? 2. Why was Festus so willing to bring Paul before him? 3. Why did Festus utter the words recorded in verse 24? 4. What did Paul mean by "these things", verse 26? 5. What is the meaning of the figure of speech in verse 26? 6. Why did Paul ask Agrippa the question in verse 27? 7. What would have followed had Agrippa said "Yes"? What, if he had said "No"? 8. What did Agrippa mean by his answer? 9. What did Paul mean by his words in verse 29? 10. What spirit did Festus show to Agrippa? 11. What spirit did he show to Paul? 12. What is the meaning of our Golden Text?

Memory and Note-Book Work. Memorize Acts 26.24-29. Write Chapter XVIII, Paul's Appeal to Cæsar.

PAUL'S DEFENCE BEFORE AGRIPPA

Golden Text

I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision. Acts 26.19

LESSON Acts 26: verses 1, 24-32 printed MEMORIZE 28, 29

1 And Agrippa said unto Paul, Thou art permitted to speak for thyself. Then Paul stretched forth his hand, and made his defence:

24 And as he thus made his defence, Festus saith with a loud voice, Paul, thou art mad; thy much learning is turning thee mad. 25 But Paul saith, I am not mad, most excellent Festus; but speak forth words of truth and soberness. 26 For the king knoweth of these things, unto whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things is hidden from him; for this hath not been done in a corner. 27 King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest. 28 And Agrippa *said* unto Paul, With but little persuasion thou wouldest fain make me a Christian. 29 And Paul *said*, I would to God, that whether with little or with much, not thou only, but also all that hear me this day, might become such as I am, except these bonds.

30 And the king rose up, and the governor, and Bernice, and they that sat with them: 31 and when they had withdrawn, they spake one to another, saying, This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds. 32 And Agrippa said unto Festus, This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Cæsar.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

I. Festus Tells Agrippa about Paul, 25.13-22.
II. Paul Brought before Agrippa, 25.23-27.
III. Paul Makes his Defence, 26.1-23.
IV. The Effect of Paul's Speech, 26.24-32.

1. *And Agrippa said.* See the Historical Background.—*Made his defence.* Verses 2-23. Paul began his defence not only of himself but of the gospel, by courteously referring to Agrippa's knowledge of Jewish questions and customs, and then he told of his own life as a Pharisee, his persecution of the Christians, his conversion and his commission to preach to the Gentiles. To the heavenly vision granted him on the way to Damascus he had been obedient and had faithfully carried out the command then received, by preaching at Damascus, at Jerusalem, and throughout Judea and to the Gentiles, that all must repent and turn to God and do works worthy of repentance. Because of his preaching the Jews had seized him in the temple, and tried to kill him. But God had helped him, and he had continued to testify to all that the prophets and Moses had foretold, a suffering and a risen Christ, the light unto all the world, Jews and Gentiles alike.

24. *Festus saith with a loud voice.* Paul is being examined by Agrippa, but Festus becomes impatient over Paul's defence, for he cares not to hear about a Judean Peasant who has been crucified, and he breaks in roughly with his remark.—*Thou art mad; thy much learning is turning thee mad.* "Paul, you are a great philosopher, but you have no common sense" (*Ramsay*). See 2 Cor. 5.13. "I tell you, what we want today is a few madmen like him; men who fear nothing but sin, and love nothing but God" (*Moody*).

25. *But Paul saith.* Paul replies with the utmost courtesy.

26. *These things.* The life, the death and resurrection of Jesus, about whom he has just been speaking.—*This hath not been done in a corner.* A figurative way of speaking, the opposite of "proclaimed from the housetops", Luke 12.3.

27. *Believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest.* Agrippa had been ruling eighteen years in Palestine at this time, and might well be familiar

with Jewish beliefs. Paul's personal thrust—a prisoner directly addressing a king—his confident expectation of an affirmative answer, with its implied reference to Agrippa's Jewish extraction, is resented by Agrippa, as his ironical answer shows. If he had admitted his knowledge of the prophets he would then have had either to agree with Paul's interpretation or to side with Paul's accusers.

28. *With but little persuasion thou wouldest fain make me a Christian.* Too easily you hope to make a Christian of me! Soon you will be making me out a Christian as well as a Jew—this was Agrippa's meaning. With much regret we must give up the familiar translation of the Authorized Version, which has been made the text of countless sermons—"Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian"—for the Greek gives not the cry of a soul "under conviction", but the jest of a proud Roman. His pride is expressed by Dr. Alexander Maclaren thus: "There is a world of contempt in Agrippa's words, in the very putting side by side of the two things. 'Me! Me!' with a large capital M—'Me a Christian?' He thinks of his dignity, poor creature. It was not such a very tremendous dignity after all. He was a petty kinglet, permitted by the grace of Rome to live and pose as if he were the real thing, and yet he struts and claps his wings and crows on his little hillock as if it were a mountain. 'Me a Christian?' 'The great Agrippa a *Christian!*'"

29. *And Paul said.* "Taking the words as though they had been spoken in earnest, Paul makes that notable answer, which expresses, as no other words ever expressed, that union of enthusiastic zeal with genuine courtesy which is the true character of a Christian" (*Conybeare*).—*Whether with little or with much.* Persuasion, verse 28.—*Might become such as I am, except these bonds.* "The saying, in its very tenderness, expresses the utmost contempt for all that these men enjoyed and were living for. Life meant for these men sensual pleasures, pompous shows, command of money, power and ambition—cups most of which St. Paul had tasted. He knew the measure of satisfaction they would yield. And he had stepped up from this to a higher platform, to a life in which vulgar ambitions were forgotten, and the pleasures of the senses were pushed out by mightier joys; to a life in which enthusiasm, hope, love, great aims, the friendship of God and fellowship with Christ, were supreme. Standing there, with the chains upon his wrists, despised or pitied by all the spectators, he felt a joyous liberty, a serene calm, a fulness of unutterable emotion, a lofty grandeur of soul, such as he knew that they had never felt and known. He was quite sure that life meant more and deeper and nobler things to him than had ever entered their hearts to conceive" (*J. C. Greenhough*).

30. *The king.* Agrippa.—*The governor.* Festus.—*Bernice.* See the Historical Background.—*They that sat with them.* See Acts 25.23.

31, 32. The analogy between the trial of Paul and that of Jesus must strike every reader. Both Pilate and Agrippa expressed their opinion that their prisoner was innocent, claimed no responsibility in the matter, and yet yielded to the clamor of the Jews because they were weak men.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

24. *Paul, thou art mad.* Thou art mad—if thou dost not think as I do! This has been the charge in all countries and all ages, and enthusiasts especially have always been subject to this accusation. Early in Christ's ministry his friends went out to lay hold on him: for, they said, "He is beside himself". And the scribes that came down from Jerusalem said, "He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the demons casteth he out the demons". After he had given sight to the blind man many of the Jews said, "He hath a demon, and is mad, why hear ye him?" Others said, "These are not the sayings of one possessed with a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?"

"But we must also remember that in the ancient world madness was closely associated with inspiration; a madman was supposed to be possessed by some supernatural power and was looked upon with awe. Festus must have had some such feeling. The mention of Moses and the prophets suggested to him that through excessive study of Jewish lore the apostle had become possessed of a religious frenzy."

26. *For this hath not been done in a corner.* Writing in the *Sunday School*

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Times, Mrs. Goshn el-Howie explains this saying. Corner, in *beshito,* or vulgar Arabic, is *courney.* The *courney,* in nearly every Syrian fellaheen dwelling, is formed by an erection, made of clay, six or seven feet high, projecting from the inner wall (near the door) at right angles toward the center of the room. The angle formed by this short wall, cupboard, or stand (for it serves different purposes), is the *courney,* the "cosy-corner" of the family, in which the aged sit, on sheepskins near the hearth. It is comparatively dark, so that a person sitting in the lighted parts of the room can hardly see who is, or what is being done, in the *courney.* It can hardly escape the student that the first preachers of the gospel assumed that the facts of the life of Christ were well known to their hearers. Compare Luke 24.18 and Acts 10.37.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. How many times has Paul already had to make his defence at Jerusalem and Cæsarea? In his speech before the mob at Jerusalem, what did he say in his defence? Why did Paul before Festus appeal to Cæsar?

Paul before Agrippa. "Unto Cæsar shalt thou go," had been the decision of Festus, who was a man of prompt action. Before Paul could be sent to Rome, however, Agrippa and his sister Bernice came to greet the new governor of Judea. Festus reported Paul's case to him, and Agrippa expressed a desire to hear Paul. The next day Paul was summoned to appear before Agrippa and Bernice, Festus, and the chief men of the city. Festus declared before them all that he had not found Paul worthy of death, but he wished Agrippa to examine Paul in order to learn himself what charges against him he should make in his letter to the emperor. Agrippa told Paul to speak for himself, and Paul then made his famous defence, which is the subject of our lesson.

Coin of Herod Agrippa II

The place of the trial is "the place of hearing" at Cæsarea. See p. 176.

King Agrippa. This Agrippa was Herod Agrippa II, called king of Chalcis, and ruler of the tetrarchies of Philip and Lysanias in Northern Palestine. He was the son of Herod Agrippa I who slew James the son of Zebedee; great nephew of Herod Antipas, who beheaded John the Baptist; great grandson of Herod the Great, who massacred the innocents in his attempt to kill the infant Jesus. He was made supervisor of the temple at Jerusalem and had the privilege of appointing its high priest. When the last Jewish war broke out with the Romans he received into his territory and protected those who fled before the siege of Titus began.

Bernice. In the Life of Paul by Christopher N. Johnston there is this account of Bernice, whose curiosity to see Paul has given her a place in the sacred record.

"Bernice was one of the most remarkable women of her time. She was the daughter of King Herod Agrippa I., and at a very early age she was married to her uncle, Herod of Chalcis, by whom she had two sons. After the death of her husband she resided with her brother, the youthful Agrippa, not without scandal. She was afterwards married to Polemon, King of Pontus, but she left him to return to her brother Agrippa. It was during this second sojourn with her brother that she accompanied him on his visit to Cæsarea. At the beginning of the Jewish war Bernice, according to Josephus, played a creditable part in endeavoring at some personal risk to dissuade the Jews from rebellion. But when the war broke out she joined the Roman camp, where she formed an alliance with Titus. Subsequently she accompanied Titus to Rome, and the Emperor was so infatuated with her that he proposed to raise her to the purple as his imperial consort. This proposal, however, excited strong prejudice at Rome, and Titus was induced to abandon it. Long afterwards the Roman satirist writes that in his day a diamond had an enhanced value if it had sparkled on Bernice's finger."

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

While it seems scarcely possible that Paul could have remained safely two whole years in Jerusalem, in Cæsarea his life was in no danger. Cæsarea was

heathenism in all its glory at the very door of the true religion! "Yes," writes Dr. George Adam Smith, "but the contrast might be reversed. It was justice and freedom in the most fanatical and turbulent province of the world. In seeking separation from his people and an open door to the West, Herod had secured those benefits for a nobler cause than his own."

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Can you claim the experience of Paul? Can you talk with your pupils as one who knows the things whereof he speaks? "Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?" questioned the Master. That is the question your pupils would have you answer, and if you can answer it aright, you can speak with arresting power. "I would that not thou only but also all that hear me this day might become such as I am," said Paul to Agrippa. Agrippa's worldly position with all its pomp and splendor was as naught compared with Paul's spiritual knowledge and perfect trust in God, and well might he wish for others the great hope and assurance and peace that was his. There was no conceit here, he was not claiming perfection, but he was claiming that the trend of his life was true. "Happy is the teacher who is not afraid of the hearer turning from the message to the messenger!" exclaims Dr. Jowett. "I looked at a florist's shop the other day and I saw many packets of seeds. In the middle of the window there was an exquisitely beautiful plant in flower, and attached to it were these words, 'Grown from our seed'. I say thrice blessed is the servant of God who, when he has been commending the seed of the Word, can point to an evident experience as confirmation of its power and grace."

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. What is going on in the city of Cæsarea? Toward the audience chamber of the Roman governor a great crowd is hastening. Let us enter with them. Here comes Festus, the governor, and with him are King Agrippa and the princess Bernice, all resplendent in royal robes. Festus is clad in scarlet, Agrippa in royal purple, a golden circlet about his forehead, and Bernice flashes with jewels. The chief captains and the retinue of soldiers follow, their helmets and coats of mail and shields and spears glittering, and they take their stand behind the gilded chairs where sit the governor and his distinguished guests. After them come all the chief citizens of the city. Soon afterwards a man is led in chained to two soldiers, and all eyes are turned upon him. Festus states who the prisoner is, what the charges are against him, his opinion that he is innocent, and his wish to learn from an examination before the king what he shall write to the great Roman emperor to whom the prisoner has asked to be sent for trial. King Agrippa stretches forth his hand in sign that the prisoner shall speak, and Paul makes his great defence of his life and conduct. What does he say?

For Older Pupils. The twenty-sixth chapter of the Acts is one of the twenty-six chapters of the Bible which Ruskin's mother had him commit to memory, whereby, as Ruskin says, she established his soul in righteousness. It is well worth being learned by heart, for it contains the finest address in the Acts, the best account we have of the great apostle's relation to his mission, and in its dignity, sincerity, skill, and persuasiveness it proves the power of the gospel to "turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God". It is called Paul's *apologia pro vita sua,* his defence of his life, but the apostle is not pleading in fear for his life; he shows, indeed, that he is not a criminal, that he has done nothing worthy of death, but he does so in defending Christianity as being not contrary to earlier divine revelation, but a fulfillment of that revelation, a culmination of all past promises.

Note the perfect courtesy with which he begins his speech; a courtesy never once lost, not even when Festus calls him crazy or when Agrippa speaks to him so contemptuously that we can almost see the smile on the faces of those who listen to his scornful jest.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I The Secret of a Great Life

Not Disobedient unto the Heavenly Vision. When Paul had that wonderful vision on his way to Damascus which utterly changed his life, it was revealed to him that responsibility went with the privilege. To this end have I appeared unto thee—Paul gives the word he heard—to appoint thee a minister and a witness both of the things wherein thou hast seen me, and of the things wherein I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom I send thee, to open their eyes, that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive remission of sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in me. Wherefore, O King Agrippa, Paul joyously added, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision. Well might he say this, he who "determined not to know anything save Jesus Christ and him crucified", whose object in living was to "preach Christ crucified"!

In earlier lessons this year we saw Peter given a vision on the housetop at Joppa and then obeying it by going to Cæsarea to preach Christ to Cornelius and baptize him; and Philip directed by an angel to the desert road toward Gaza and obeying the vision by going at once and explaining there the word of God to the Ethiopian. To the shepherds watching their flocks in the fields near Bethlehem came the vision and song of the angelic host, and they obeyed by going in haste to find the Babe and making known concerning the saying that was spoken to them about this Child; to the magi came the vision of the star which they followed till it stood over where the young Child was and they came into the house and fell down and worshipped him. Visions are given for a purpose; they are commands to be obeyed.

Blessed is he who is Obedient. Luther saw a vision of a church free from corrupt ecclesiasticism, of every man going to the original fountain for his spiritual drink, of every man worshipping according to the dictates of his own conscience. The dream, the vision, the inspiration of religious freedom swept over his soul and he defied crowned heads, and mitered heads and the very powers of the air, so intent was he on being obedient to that vision which had enlightened him, rejoiced him, and now controlled all his splendid manhood and commanding genius.

Hundreds are toiling today for reforms that seem well nigh hopeless, because they must. A vision of duty is ever with them. A vision of the world's wants and pain and sorrow haunts them. God has revealed to many a man that he must help to make the world better. Blessed is he, if he is obedient. Woe, woe to him if he is disobedient to the vision.

You have had visions! Deny it not! To your soul there was revealed something far better than the present condition. You saw where you might serve men and serve God. You saw where your own life might be purified and your character ennobled. Every nerve of your nobler self was set vibrating like the strings to the Eolian harp when the wind sweeps over it. Perhaps you were alone when the vision came, and you forgot it when you passed out among men. Perhaps you were sitting in church, and as the preacher spoke of duty, of possibility, of responsibility, of reward, the vision flashed before you and you said, "Yes, Lord, I will", and the vision passed away again when you went home and began to bicker about the trifles of life. Oh, what visions have come! but you were disobedient to them. *Condensed* from an *Article* by *Myron W. Haynes,* in the *Homiletic Review.*

All Heavenly Visions are Meant to Secure Human Obedience. We have not done what God means us to do with any knowledge of him which he grants, unless we utilize it to drive the wheels of life and carry it out into practice in our daily conduct. Revelation is not meant to satisfy mere curiosity or the idle desire to know. It shines above us like the stars, but, unlike them, it shines to be the guide of our lives. And whatsoever glimpse of the divine nature, or of Christ's love, nearness, and power, we have ever caught, was meant to bow our wills in glad submission, and to animate our hands for diligent service and to quicken our feet to run in the way of his commandments.

There is plenty of idle gazing, with more or less of belief, at the heavenly vision. I beseech you to lay to heart this truth, that Christ rends the heavens

and shows us God, not that men may know, but that men may, knowing, do; and all his visions are the bases of commandments. So the question for us all is, What are we doing with what we know of Jesus Christ? Nothing? Have we translated our thoughts of him into actions, and have we put all our actions under the control of our thoughts of him? It is not enough that a man should say, "Whereupon I *saw* the vision", or "Whereupon I was *convinced* of the vision", or, "Whereupon I *understood* the vision". Sight, apprehension, theology, orthodoxy, they are all very well, but the right result is, "Whereupon I was *not disobedient* unto the heavenly vision". And unless your knowledge of Christ makes you do, and keep from doing, a thousand things, it is only an idle vision, which adds to your guilt. *Dr. Alexander Maclaren,* in *The Acts of the Apostles.*

The World's Sunday School Celebration. Today there is being held in Tokyo, Japan, a meeting of the delegates to the Convention of the World's Sunday-School Association, and in all the Sunday-schools of our land, and indeed in the Sunday-schools scattered all over the earth, for it has been translated into over two hundred languages and dialects, the same program is being used in celebrating "World's Sunday School Day". It is a wonderful vision which this Association has, nothing less than a vision of all the men, women and children in all the world brought under the influence of the Sunday-school and Bible Study, and its officers and leaders and delegates in obedience to that vision are doing all in their power to make it come true.

The Vision Demands Action.

Dreams grow holy put in action,
Work grows fair through starry dreaming,
But when each flows on unminglingly
Both are fruitless and in vain. *A. A. Proctor.*

II. The World's Judgment on Enthusiasm

Paul's Madness. Festus and Felix and Agrippa, and all of that class, regarded him as deranged, and it certainly did seem an absurdity for any man deliberately to choose such a life as that which St. Paul lived—a man well born, well educated, with marvellous energy and exceptional intelligence. There were few positions in the Jewish nation, perhaps not a great number in the Roman Empire, to which he might not have aspired. He certainly had it in him to acquire great wealth and distinguished honors. Instead of that he preferred a career of obloquy, poverty, and continued hardships, with tears, stripes, and imprisonment at every step, with no money at the end, no reputation—only ignominy, a violent death, and an unknown grave. If such a man were found today three-fourths of the people would call him just what the world called St. Paul. It was only in God's eyes, then, that he was supremely wise. But now we all know that God's judgment was true. This man has a name that will endure for ever. It stands second in Christian history to the Master's name—a long way behind, yet second. He has influenced and shaped the thoughts of our progressive Western world more than any other person who was merely human. He has won a crown of eternal honor, and, if we had our choice, every one of us would a hundred times rather be a St. Paul, with all his sufferings, than the prosperous man of the parable of whom the Master's lips said, "Thou Fool".

Nay, was not the Blessed Lord himself charged with madness by those who persecuted and crucified him? His life, with its hunger, loneliness, and weariness, its high ideals and daily rejections, and its apparent utter failure at the last, seemed to that dark, blinded world a senseless, aimless, insane infatuation. Yet now we declare that in him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. And the world which called him a fool adores him to-day as divine. *J. G. Greenhough,* in *The Mind of Christ in St. Paul.*

Who is the Madman? The rustle in the crowd was scarcely over, when the strong, masterful voice of the governor rasped out the coarse taunt, which according to one reading, was made coarser (and more lifelike) by repetition, "Thou art mad, Paul; thou art mad." So did a hard, "practical man" think of that strain of lofty conviction, and of that story of the appearance of the Christ. To be in earnest about wealth, or power, or science, or pleasure, is not

madness, so the world thinks; but to be in earnest about religion, one's own soul, or other people's, is. Which was the saner, Paul, who "counted all things but dung that he might win Christ", or Festus, who counted keeping his governorship, and making all that he could out of it, the one thing worth living for? Who is the madman, he who looks up and sees Jesus, and bows before him for lifelong service, or he who looks up and says, "I see nothing up there; I keep my eyes on the main chance down here"? It would be a saner and a happier world if there were more of us mad after Paul's fashion. *Dr. Alexander Maclaren,* in *The Acts of the Apostles.*

The Madness of a Missionary. Many years ago a young woman of taste and genius burst into sudden and great popularity as a brilliant writer in the periodical literature of the day, and in a little while her fortune was made, and she might now sit as a queen in the highest circle of American society. But presently it was announced that Miss Forrester had consented to become the wife of Judson, the missionary, now far advanced in life, and to plunge with him into the darkest heart of heathendom. To Burmah she went, did and bore her Savior's will there till life could hold out no longer, and then came home to die. "The woman is mad!" rang from end to end of America; but in her essay, "The Madness of the Missionary Enterprise", she showed the statesmanship and wisdom of loving sacrifice. *Sunday School Chronicle.*

III Far from the Kingdom

With but Little Persuasion thou wouldest Fain Make me a Christian. As we now rightly understand the Greek, Agrippa was not almost persuaded, but he was far from being persuaded, to be a Christian. Instead of being not far from the kingdom, he was indifferent to the Kingdom. Dr. Alexander Maclaren, in "Christ's Musts", rightly interprets the lesson of Agrippa's position. "He is half amused and half angry at the apostle's presumption in supposing that so easily, or so quickly, he was going to land his fish. 'It is a more difficult task than you fancy, Paul, to make a Christian of a man like me.' That is the real meaning of his words. And I think that rightly understood, they yield lessons of no less value than those that have been so often drawn from them as they appear in our Authorized Version. Mark the contrast, for instance, between him and the bluff Roman official at his side. To Festus, Paul's talking about a dead man's having risen, and a risen Jew becoming a light to all nations, was such utter nonsense that with characteristic Roman contempt for men with ideas, he breaks in with his rough, strident voice, 'Much learning has made thee mad'. There was not much chance of that cause producing that effect on Festus. But he was, apparently, utterly bewildered at this entirely novel and unintelligible sort of talk. Agrippa, on the other hand, knows all about it, has heard that there was such a thing, and has a general, rough notion of what Paul believed, as a Christian. And was he any better for it? No! He was a great deal worse. It took the edge off a good deal of his curiosity. It made him fancy that he knew beforehand all that the apostle had to say. It stood in the way of his apprehending the truths which he vainly thought that he understood.

"And although the world knows a great deal more about Jesus Christ and the Gospel than he did, the very same thing is true about hundreds and thousands of people who have all their lives long been brought into contact with Christianity. Superficial knowledge is the worst enemy of accurate knowledge. For the first condition of knowing a thing is to know that we do not know it."

Ears to Hear, that will not Hear. Miss Slattery has told about hearing a girl calling to a younger sister, who had her hands over her ears. Louder and louder the older girl called. And then the little girl shouted: "Don't call any louder, for I can't hear you anyway." And the lesson which Miss Slattery draws is that in this way we often treat God: we make up our minds that we will not hear him, no matter how long and how loud he may call us.

Some that are Afar Off Might quickly Enter the Kingdom. I have seen in summer, when June has been chilly and rainy, dark bushes full of buds that could not blossom. They remained buds, and buds, and buds, and buds, opening a little, green mostly, showing stripes of pink here and there, as if the calyx were about to turn back to let out the petal; but there came a glorious, mid-

June day, when the milder winds came from the south, and gentle, warm rains fell, and the sun broke out in warmth and effulgence; and on that very day they were delivered into the full ripeness of beauty, in an hour. While they were buds they were full of expectation; when they were blossoms they were full of beauty; and there are multitudes of men that are in the Christian bud; and if there could be some sudden warmth, some inspiration of the Holy Ghost, some sympathy with deep and true Christian dispositions found about them, there is no reason in the world why they should not blossom in an hour. *Henry Ward Beecher.*

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

Our ideals are our visions. Let us idealize our lives, and actualize our ideals. Remember that the heavenly vision comes in very humble and *every-day* forms, not in visits of angels or light flashing down from the skies. It comes in the simple guise of duty: the thing which you ought to do today, and which you know that you ought to do. That is the heavenly vision of the moment. You are to give up that sin, you are to deny yourself that pleasure, you are to undertake that bit of work for others, you are to break from certain habits and companionships. That is what God says to you at the moment. You are sure of it. It is the vision that you have to follow—follow it! *J. G. Greenhough.*

Our Prayer. O God, we pray that the ears of those who know the truth about thee and thy purpose for them may not grow dull, that their hearts may not become so hard that, like Agrippa of old, they spurn the offer of salvation. To Paul on the way to Damascus came a clear vision of what he ought to be and to do, and he obeyed the vision. Such a vision thou dost send to each of us: help us to obey it and enter the fellowship of all brave, true, God-fearing and God-serving lives.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Paul as an orator. See "St. Paul the Orator" by Maurice Jones.
2. The vision of the World's Sunday-School Association. See p. 405, and articles in current religious periodicals.
3. The peril of indifference. See *The Churchman,* March 20, 1915, p. 370; and "The Great Refusal", *Outlook,* Sept. 23, 1914, p. 159.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. Describe the voyage to Fair Havens. (Acts 27.1-8.) 2. Who were Paul's traveling companions? 3. How did the centurion treat his prisoner? 4. What was Paul's counsel at Fair Havens, and why was it disregarded? (Acts 27.9-12.) 5. How many times did Paul give advice on this voyage? (Verses 10, 21-26, 31, 33-35.) 6. What was "their purpose" which they thought they had attained? 7. What is the meaning of the word *Euraquilo?* (*Guide,* p. 408.) 8. What is the meaning of "they lowered the gear", verse 17? (*Guide,* p. 409.) 9. What is meant by "the tackling" of the ship? (*Guide,* p. 409.) 10. How often are the words "good cheer" used in the New Testament? 11. Where were Fair Havens and Phœnix? (*Guide,* p. 411.) 12. How far from Crete was the island of Cauda? (*Guide,* p. 411.) 13. To what country does Crete now belong? 14. When did the compass come into use in European waters? 15. Read Ps. 107.23-32.

Questions to Think About. 1. What was Paul's official position on the boat? 2. What was his real position there? (See verses 1, 3, 9, 21, 31, 33, 35, 43.) 3. What is the meaning of "we gave way to it", verse 15? 4. What boat was it that they were in danger of losing? 5. Why were the sailors troubled because they could see neither sun nor stars? 6. Why did Paul remind the rest that if they had listened to his first advice it would have been well? (*Guide,* p. 409.) 7. When a boat was out in a storm on the Sea of Galilee, who was the only calm one on board?

Memory and Note-Book Work. Commit to memory Ps. 107.23-25, 28-30. Write Chapter XIX, Paul's Defence before Agrippa.

THE VOYAGE

Golden Text

Commit thy way unto Jehovah;
Trust also in him, and he will bring it to pass. Psalm 37.5

LESSON Acts 27.1-38: verses 13-26 printed MEMORIZE verses 22-24

13 And when the south wind blew softly, supposing that they had obtained their purpose, they weighed anchor and sailed along Crete, close in shore. 14 But after no long time there beat down from it a tempestuous wind, which is called Euraquilo: 15 and when the ship was caught, and could not face the wind, we gave way *to it,* and were driven. 16 And running under the lee of a small island called Cauda, we were able, with difficulty, to secure the boat: 17 and when they had hoisted it up, they used helps, under-girding the ship; and, fearing lest they should be cast upon the Syrtis, they lowered the gear, and so were driven. 18 And as we labored exceedingly with the storm, the next day they began to throw *the freight* overboard; 19 and the third day they cast out with their own hands the tackling of the ship. 20 And when neither sun nor stars shone upon *us* for many days, and no small tempest lay on *us,* all hope that we should be saved was now taken away. 21 And when they had been long without food, then Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have set sail from Crete, and have gotten this injury and loss. 22 And now I exhort you to be of good cheer; for there shall be no loss of life among you, but *only* of the ship. 23 For there stood by me this night an angel of the God whose I am, whom also I serve, 24 saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must stand before Cæsar: and lo, God hath granted thee all them that sail with thee. 25 Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even so as it hath been spoken unto me. 26 But we must be cast upon a certain island.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

I. From Cæsarea to Myra. 1-5.
II. From Myra to Fair Havens. 6-8.
III. The Dangerous Voyage from Fair Havens. 9-26.
  1. Conflicting Advice. 9-12.
  2. Caught in the Tempest. 13-19.
  3. Paul the Encourager. 20-26.

13. *Supposing that they had obtained their purpose.* They wished to reach Phœnix, farther west on the Island of Crete, verse 12. Phœnix was only thirty-four miles away, the wind was favorable, and they thought they could accomplish the journey, despite the danger, verse 9.—*They weighed anchor.* Literally, *having taken up.*

14. *There beat down from it.* From the mountains of Crete. Professor Ramsay quotes a modern sea-captain as saying, "The wind comes down from those mountains fit to blow the ship out of the water".—*A tempestuous wind.* "Literally, *a typhonic wind.* The word means a typhoon" (*Vincent*). "The sudden blasts of the Mediterranean produce a vortex which is called a typhoon" (*Pliny*). —*Euraquilo.* This word is a compound of *Eurus,* east, and *Aquilo,* northeast. It was a northeast wind that blew down upon them from the Cretan Highlands.

15. *Could not face the wind.* Literally, *not being able to look the wind in the face.* On some ancient ships an eye was painted on each side of the prow.—*We gave way to it.* The ship ran before the wind.

16. *Cauda. Clauda,* RVm.—*The boat.* The small boat attached to the stern by a rope, which was in danger of being swept away or dashed in pieces against the side of the ship. See verse 30.

17. *When they had hoisted it up.* The only way in which the smaller boat could be saved was by getting it on board the larger.—*They used helps, undergirding the ship.* Much as a weak trunk is *frapped* (to use the nautical term) with ropes to make it withstand the storm of the baggage-man's fury, ancient ships were frapped by passing helps, ropes and chains, around the hull to prevent the ship's timbers from starting under the strain of the tempest.—*The Syrtis. The quicksands,* A. V. The sandbanks off the African coast, toward which the wind was blowing them.—*They lowered the gear. Strake sail,* A. V. What the Greek word σκεῦος means here is uncertain. It is the same word that is translated *great sheet* in Acts 10.11. Mr. Rackham suggests that it may mean the gear or the main yard-arm, but thinks Dr. Breusing's interpretation more probable. "He has shown that it was the custom for the ancients in a storm to lower cables, with weights and anchors attached, into the sea, in order to retard the vessel: and σκεῦος means such a weight or anchor, only to be used in the last extremity. To retard the vessel was the present need: and this is the way the Bezan text understands it—*they lowered a weight to drag.* The sails would have been reefed before now, as the Bezan text, in fact, states in verse 15."

18. *To throw the freight overboard. The freight* is printed in italics to show that it is not in the Greek. The verb means literally, *they made a casting out.* See verse 38 and Jonah 1.5.

19. *The tackling. Furniture,* RVm. Smith suggests that it was the main-yard that went overboard, which would greatly lighten the ship; others suggest the tables, chests, and everything moveable aboard.

20. *Neither sun nor stars shone.* They relied on these to make their reckoning, as there was no compass in those days and they were beyond the sight of land.—*Many days.* Fourteen days were spent between leaving Crete and reaching Malta.—*All hope that we should be saved was now taken away.* They had sunk into the lethargy of despair. Had they prayed? A Russian proverb says that "He who has not been upon the sea has never prayed to God."

21. *Paul stood forth in the midst of them.* "Contrast Jonah with Paul, the guilty stupor of the former, down 'in the sides of the ship' cowering before the storm, with the calm behavior and collected courage of the latter" (*Maclaren*). —*Ye should have hearkened unto me.* See verse 10. Paul's words sound like "I told you so", but he is not taunting them nor boasting of his superior knowledge; he reminds them of his earlier warning in order to more readily persuade them to follow his present counsel.

22. *There shall be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship.* "Any man will rather make shipwreck of his goods than of his life; but many will rather make shipwreck of faith and of good conscience than of their goods" (*Matthew Henry*).

They that go down in the sea in ships,
That do business in great waters,
These see the works of Jehovah,
And his wonders in the deep.
For he commandeth, and raiseth the strong wind,
Which lifteth up the waves thereof.
Then they cry unto Jehovah in their trouble,
And he bringeth them out of their distresses.
He maketh the storm a calm,
So that the waves thereof are still.
Then are they glad because they are quiet;
So he bringeth them unto their desired haven.
Ps. 107.23-25, 28-30.

23. *Whose I am, whom also I serve.* "To belong to God expresses the essence of inward religion, while to serve him is the sum of religion in practice" (*Maclaren*).

24. *Thou must stand before Cæsar.* See Acts 23.11.—*God hath granted thee.* The inference is that their lives were granted Paul in answer to his prayer. Compare Gen. 18.23-33.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

2. *Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, being with us.* We have not seen the personal pronoun *we* in our narrative since Paul and the delegates brought their contributions to the Church at Jerusalem and Paul rehearsed all the things God had wrought among the Gentiles through his ministry, but now at the commencement of the voyage to Rome the pronoun appears again. Luke, then, was with Paul; he loved the sea, and therefore gives us so graphic an account of the voyage. Aristarchus of Thessalonica, too, was with Paul. Professor Ramsay tells us that these two would not have been allowed to accompany Paul as his friends; he cites a case mentioned by Pliny where a wife sought to accompany her husband who was a prisoner, but was denied the privilege, although several slaves were permitted to go with him to Rome as his attendants, and he infers that Luke and Aristarchus went as Paul's slaves, thus adding to Paul's importance in the eyes of the centurion in whose charge he was sent.

15. *The ship.* By this time the vast city of Rome had become almost entirely dependent on foreign corn-fields for its bread. Egypt was the chief source of supply, and every year an enormous quantity of grain was shipped at Alexandria for Puteoli or Ostia. The vessels which carried it were of a specially large build, and the Alexandrian corn-fleet was the most striking feature in the commerce of the eastern Mediterranean. As any delay in the arrival of the fleet was the source of great anxiety at Rome, so its arrival was hailed at Puteoli with great rejoicings. Signalmen were on the lookout to announce its approach, and they were able to recognize it by the privilege these vessels possessed of entering the bay of Naples with their sails set. *R. B. Rackham.* It was one of these ships in which the voyage to Rome was being made. See verses 6 and 38.

An Ancient Mediterranean Ship, Showing Main Mast, Foresail, and Rudders

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. What experience with shipwreck had Paul had before this? (2 Cor. 11.25.) In what times of peril had Paul been of good cheer? In what times of perplexity had he been guided by God?

From Cæsarea to Fair Havens. After the hearing before Agrippa, Festus gave Paul and certain other prisoners into the charge of a centurion named Julius to be taken to Rome. A ship from Adramyttium was about to make the return voyage to the coast of Asia Minor, and Julius took passage with his prisoners. Luke and Aristarchus of Thessalonica were with Paul. The ship stopped at Sidon, when Julius kindly allowed Paul to see his friends, and then crossed over to Cyprus and, sailing around the eastward end of the island, went northwestward to the province of Lycia. This harbor was a great port for ships from Egypt and Syria. They were fortunate in finding there a ship from Alexandria that was bound directly for Italy, and they sailed with it. The wind was unfavorable, and it took them many days to reach Cnidus, the southwestern point of Asia Minor, and not being able to cross the Ægean Sea to Greece, as they should have done, they turned southward to Crete. Sailing along the southern shore of that island, they succeeded with difficulty in reaching Fair Havens, where they waited for a change of wind. After a tedious delay the question of continuing the voyage was discussed. The dangerous season for navigation lasted from September fourteenth to November eleventh, and then all navigation on the open sea ceased until March, we are told. "The ship reached Fair Havens in the latter part of September, and was detained there by a continuance of unfavorable winds until October fifth." Paul advised them not to start out again, for he knew a voyage would be attended by great danger to the ship and to their lives. But the harbor was not a good one in

which to pass the winter, the captain and owner of the ship were anxious to reach Phœnix and winter there, and the centurion naturally paid more heed to their advice than to Paul's. It was decided to sail for Phœnix.

The date was September 58, according to the chronology followed here.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Fair Havens, whence the ship set sail, verse 13, was a harbor near the center of the southern shore of the island of Crete, a little east of Cape Matala, the most conspicuous headland on the coast. Phœnix, the port to which the ship was bound, was a few hours' sail away to the west, the best harbor on the southern coast of Crete.

The island of Cauda was about twenty-five miles south of Phœnix.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

It was when all hope of their being saved was taken away that the sailors let the ship drift. So it is in all undertakings. While our hope holds, we steer; when all hope is gone, we drift. Hope is the motive power needed in guiding a ship at sea to its destined port, or in directing a pupil's thoughts to his eternal haven. Recall the experience of Captain Scott and his heroic men in their search for the South Pole. As long as their hope held out their journals tell of most heroic advance in spite of terribly adverse conditions, but when they came within sight of the spot and saw Amudsen's flag flying there, and learned that to him belonged the glory, they could strive no longer. Have you put on the helmet of hope?

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. When you take up a new copy of the *Youth's Companion,* what page do you read first? I believe most boys turn at once to the page containing the story of adventure. "It beats all the other stories in the paper", one boy exclaimed enthusiastically, "and I wouldn't miss it for anything." There never was a true story of adventure at sea more exciting than Paul's on his way to Rome, as told in the twenty-seventh chapter of Acts, the Sailor's Chapter, as it is called. We have been following the fortunes of our hero for many months, and have seen him in great perils, but you will find this voyage and shipwreck more thrillingly interesting than any of the dangers through which he has already passed. Let us turn to our maps and follow his course.

For Older Pupils. Before the passengers of the stranded steamer "Paris" separated, they presented to the officers and crew resolutions of thanks for the wonderful discipline, courage and unfailing helpfulness they had shown. After this had been voted, Baron Oppenheim, one of the wealthiest Jews of Europe, rose to his feet. The resolutions, he observed, included the captain, the under-officers, the stewards, cooks and crew; but of the one to whom each directly owed his safety—of God—he had heard no mention. They were folk of many beliefs, gathered there. He would not even call for a spoken prayer, but he suggested that they bow their heads there in silent thanksgiving to the common Protector of them all. A writer in the *Youth's Companion* tells the incident and aptly likens that scene to another shipwreck which occurred nearly nineteen hundred years ago, when a Hebrew of the Hebrews, one Paul by name, gathered the Gentile soldiers and sailors about him to give thanks to the Ruler of the seas.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Throwing Freight Overboard

A Wise Course. On that stormy voyage when Paul was being taken to Rome and the ship was in danger of foundering, the sailors lightened it by throwing overboard the freight, and then the tackling of the ship, and later the wheat which was the ship's cargo. All these things cast overboard were of great value, but when it was seen that they could not be saved without sinking the ship, there was no question about them, even the owner of the cargo would not insist on keeping it aboard.

There are a multitude of things of value in themselves which are nevertheless a handicap in life's voyage, and to the one whom they burden it is not always plain that they should be thrown out. It requires insight to see what is of vital importance and what may profitably be neglected. What not to do is often of as great importance as what to do, wise neglect as much a factor in success as brave performance. The art of life is to attend to the things which matter, and to neglect the rest, some one has wisely affirmed. What does matter? That is the question that is more often ignored than settled. The Marthas are cumbered with much serving, they see the need of the work and they do it all because they have never discovered what may be neglected in order that they may have their share of the Marys' better part.

What most Matters? If I only can make money and become a rich man I shall be satisfied, says the youth starting out in life.

We must make every effort to establish ourselves in the best society before Helen is through school, says the ambitious mother, this is the chief thing.

Fame, intoxicating fame, must be mine however it is attained, say the Marie Bashkirtseffs.

Power shall be mine, the glory of making men's wills bow to mine, for this I will give up all else in life, the strong man acknowledges to himself.

A life of ease is what I crave, nothing else matters, but peace and comfort I must have at all costs.

I must have a good time, a gay time, as long as life lasts, for this is what my nature demands.

Wealth, position, fame, power, leisure, good times, are all good in themselves, but they are not the chief good. They may be too dearly bought. To gain them much that is of far greater value may be lost. It may be that had the freight not been cast overboard from Paul's ship, the ship and all on board would have perished. What doth it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his life? But one thing is needful, said the Savior in the Bethany home.

Carrying too much Baggage. A train on the Lehigh and another on the New York Central, each having the same locomotive power and the same number of coaches, were racing from Niagara Falls to Tonawanda. The Epworth Herald gives the account. For a few miles they ran fender-and-fender. The passengers enjoyed the sensation, and finally became as excited as folks at a baseball game. Handkerchiefs were waved and fists shaken. The conductor on the Lehigh train came through one of the coaches and said: "They'll win, I'm afraid, for they have a lighter load." A passenger asked: "How so?" The conductor answered: "Well, one of our cars is a baggage

car, chock full of Canadian trunks and satchels, and that fact will beat us in the next two miles." So it did. The New York Central train swept into the Tonawanda yards triumphant. Too much baggage lost the race. Sins are burdensome. Let us be careful that we do not carry too much baggage to win in the voyage of life.

Drop them Overboard. "Avoid worry, anger, fear, hate, and all abnormal and depressing mental states," says an eminent authority on health and right living. "This is to be done not so much by repressing these feelings as by dropping or ignoring them." There is great significance in that little word "dropping". For the most part we attempt to get rid of our worries and resentments—those feelings that we admit we ought not to cherish—by trying to argue them down, and the more we reason about them the stronger hold they take. Trying to put them down is like trying to put one's self to sleep; the very effort prevents the desired result. But dropping them unsettled and unstraightened as unworthy of any concern is far easier and more effectual. *Forward.*

II Encouragers

I Exhort you to be of Good Cheer. This was the characteristic and constant ministry of the apostle Paul. He moved about in the ways of men a Herald of Good Cheer. When he came into an assembly his very presence brought the ministry of light and air and quickening. He was an apostle of encouragement, ever feeding smouldering fires, restoring flickering lamps, bringing back a cheery light of hope to the blank and desolate soul. He was an optimist who borrowed his light and flame from the temple and altar of the Most High God. The steady heartening word he spoke at this crisis of the tempest was a familiar sound upon his lips, for whenever he found men despondent, discouraged, losing heart in the long wait of the long fight, this was his inspiriting appeal: "I exhort you to be of good cheer."

Now this ministry of cheer is always needed in life voyages, and never more needed than it is to-day. Never was there a time when there was greater need than now of the herald of cheerfulness, the optimistic messenger, whose word is music, whose tone is confidence, and whose spirit conveys the energies of the Holy Ghost. And surely the professed disciples of Christ, the church of the living God, should be a society of encouragers, following the example of the Master, comforting his people, "telling the good tidings unto Zion". From a *Sermon* by *Dr. J. H. Jowett.*

Whence their Bravery Came. The old captain had been telling the story of his being wrecked in the Gulf Stream. Eight days and nights had passed before rescue came. "Everything that we had to eat in that time was some raw corn that we saved from the vessel", he said, with a glow of thankfulness instead of the melancholy tones many others would have used. "We suffered much, but we had good courage." "What gave you all such bravery?" one asked. "The strong words of Jack Lambert. At first, when great waves swooped down upon us, we cried for mercy. Another felt his grasp loosening, and called on God. Jack said, 'Messmates, let us all pray together, at morning, noon, and night, and thank God as we did on land.' 'Ay, ay!' we answered back as heartily as we could. After that, God seemed right with us as every voice pleaded regularly with the Almighty. Just at the end of a morning prayer one cried, 'Sail ho!' and we saw the ship that saved us." *Charles N. Sinnett.*

Not "Contrary to Regulations". A minister had sealed a letter to a friend when he bethought himself that he had forgotten to add a cheerful message, and so he wrote on the outside of the envelope, "Be of good cheer, brother." When the man received the letter, as the "Record of Christian Work" tells us, he found that the Post Office authorities had stamped against the word of counsel this intimation, "Contrary to Regulations". How many Christians in the stress and strain and storms of life read this word of Paul's as if it were "Be of good cheer, brother—contrary to regulations"! The Christian may be of good cheer even on board of a hulk drifting before the fury of the storm, for he is in the safe keeping of One who holds the winds in his fist and the seas in the hollow of his hand.

Be a Heartener. When Cousin Juliet went to spend the winter with the Burtons, the young people of Canterbury welcomed her with double cordiality,

half upon the Burton's account and half upon her own. Juliet was pretty and clever and fond of gaiety, and at first was extremely popular.

As the months passed a change began to be noticed in the way people spoke of her. One day a girl explained it in a sentence. "Juliet Burton is pretty and bright, I know," she said, "but somehow she takes all the flavor out of the things you have or do; you go away from a talk with her feeling so poor."

How did she do it? In such unconscious ways! When little Mrs. Bates, for instance, proud over her new achievement, showed her the first basket she had made, Juliet said that the "lazy squaw" stitch was such a comfort because anybody could pick it up.

Delicate Amy Eliot, who had been ordered to live in the open air as much as possible, began to study birds. One day she told Juliet delightedly that she had seen a cardinal. Juliet answered that the cardinal was one of the commonest birds in that part of the country.

She did not mean to be inconsiderate; she would have said that she was merely stating facts. But there are so many different ways of stating facts!

"There's folks that are smart and folks that are entertaining, and folks that are just as pretty to look at as pictures", an old countrywoman once said, "but give me every time the kind that heartens you up".

It is too good a word to grow old-fashioned, and happily the kind itself is never obsolete. If there are Juliets who dishearten—take the flavor out—there are always others whose lovely mission it is to dispel the creeping mists, and make us see our small kingdoms bright and full of promise before us, and send us on our way "heartened up". *Youth's Companion.*

III The Supremacy of Character

Paul the Master. It was a favorite saying of Thomas Carlyle that "a hero is a hero at all points of him, in the secret heart of him first of all"; that is, his heroism comes out on all occasions. He needs no specially prepared platform to show his qualities. Wherever he treads is his platform. Place him wherever you please he cannot help being just what he is, just what God has made him. This, at least, was magnificently true of St. Paul. We see him disputing with Athenian philosophers, we see him in prison, we see him before howling mobs, we see him standing before magistrates and kings, and in all these scenes he is unchanged. It is always the same calm face that confronts us, and the same brave heart, strengthened with God's might in the inner man.

And now we see him in an entirely new and unfamiliar position, not facing the wrath of man, but exposed to the terrors of the sea. And it may be truly said that he never showed himself to more advantage than on the deck of this storm-shaken, half-foundering ship. This enthusiast, fanatic, and dreamer, as most men called him, this visionary and impractical idealist, as most men deemed him, proved to be the most shrewd, cool-headed, clear-sighted man on board when the extreme danger put them all on their trial. He knew nothing of the mariner's trade. He had served no apprenticeship on that line; but he had learned to keep his eyes open, his mind steady, and his pulses calm. He had been trained to despise danger, and to look without blanching into the grim face of death. He knew how to do the right thing at the right time, and was able to do it without flurry or excitement. All that served him now.

It is not so much skill that avails in hours of peril, but the unshaken nerve, the steady hand, the heart that beats evenly, the courage that rises to the occasion. This was St. Paul's qualification in that scene which lent itself to panic. He faced the storm there, as he had faced many a furious crowd, as he faced the great Cæsar afterwards—sure of himself because sure of his God, having that within which mastered fear, and subduing other people's terrors by his own undisturbed serenity; he made them all feel from the captain of the ship down to the humblest cabin-boy, that they were in the presence of a master-mind, that there was inspiration in his example and safety in his counsels. Better still, he made them all feel that God was near, because he was so sure of it himself. *J. G. Greenhough,* in *The Mind of Christ in St. Paul.*

A Leader of Unshakable Faith in God. Not long ago the newspapers were publishing the story of a fearful mine accident in which many lost their lives. Among all the horrors it was pleasant to read of one brave Christian,

whose Christianity was made manifest against the dark background of disaster. Shut in with a company of twenty of his companions, he was their leader in song and prayer during the long week when they waited for rescue, and kept up their courage with his brave words. "Abide with me", was the song which he taught them in those dark days, and even those who could not speak the English language learned to follow with the others.

As in the days of Paul's shipwreck, all still turn in trouble to the man whose faith in God is strong. The miner might have wished in vain to be able to carry comfort and strength to his comrades had he not long before the day of testing formed the habit of abiding in God. Because he was known among them as a consistent Christian, he was able to give them help. Others know if your religious life be genuine or not. It is not necessary to tell them. The life "hid with Christ in God" cannot be hidden for long. It shines out and people recognize it, and in the time of need they will look for it. There is no man so strong as the man whose faith in the goodness and providence of God is unshakable. A week spent in the darkness and misery of a mine, with hunger gnawing and hope of rescue growing fainter day by day, is a test of faith such as few of us will ever be called upon to endure, but in our lesser measure every one of us is tested, and we can help others only as we are ourselves strong enough to stand the test. *Forward.*

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

Paul believed that God's presence was always with him. It was doubtless in answer to prayer that he received the assurance that he and all on board should escape with their lives. In all the storm and stress of life let us commit our way unto the Lord, and trust in him.

Could we make Paul's assertion—whose I am and whom I serve—to those with whom we have been closely associated for two weeks? Would our life with them bear out our words?

Our Prayer: O Lord our God, steer thou the vessel of our life toward thyself, thou tranquil haven of all storm-tossed souls. Show us the course wherein we should go. Renew a willing spirit within us. Let thy Spirit curb our wayward senses, and guide and enable us to aspire unto that which is our true good, to keep thy laws, and in all our works evermore to rejoice in thy glorious and gladdening presence. For thine is the glory and praise for ever and ever. Amen. *St. Basil,* A. D. 379.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Going to Rome at last. See the Third Topic; also pp. 254-263 of "Epochs in the Life of Paul", by Dr. A. T. Robertson, and Chapter XIV of Ramsay's "St. Paul the Traveller".
2. The voyage of life.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. Why were the soldiers anxious that their prisoners should not escape? (Acts 12.19; 16.27.) 2. What is meant by "loosing the bands of the rudders"? (*Guide,* p. 416.) 3. Describe the shipwreck. 4. What is the meaning here of the word "barbarians"? (*Guide,* p. 417.) 5. Tell what happened upon the shore of Malta. 6. What was the custom in the early church in regard to receiving strangers? (*Guide,* p. 420.) 7. What can you learn from Lk. 13.1-5 and Jn. 9.1-3 in regard to the current belief in retribution for sin? 8. What is the modern name of the island of Melita? 9. To what country does it belong?

Questions to Think About. 1. Since Paul believed that God would not let any one on the boat perish, why did he prevent the escape of the sailors? 2. Explain what happened to the ship when it went aground. (*Guide,* p. 416.) 3. What qualities were shown by Paul on the voyage from Cæsarea to Malta? (*Guide,* ¶ 6, p. 419.) 4. Does the hour make the leader or does the crisis reveal him? 5. What moral or religious lesson can we gain from this account? 6. Do you trust God's care? 7. Where do you trust his care? 8. How long should one trust his care?

Note-Book Work. Write Chapter XX, Paul's Voyage from Cæsarea to Fair Havens.

SHIPWRECKED ON MELITA (MALTA)

Golden Text

Jehovah redeemeth the soul of his servants;
And none of them that take refuge in him shall be condemned. Psalm 34.22

LESSON Acts 27.38-28.10: verses 38-44 printed MEMORIZE verses 42-44

38 And when they had eaten enough, they lightened the ship, throwing out the wheat into the sea. 39 And when it was day, they knew not the land: but they perceived a certain bay with a beach, and they took counsel whether they could drive the ship upon it. 40 And casting off the anchors, they left them in the sea, at the same time loosing the bands of the rudders; and hoisting up the foresail to the wind, they made for the beach. 41 But lighting upon a place where two seas met, they ran the vessel aground; and the foreship struck and remained unmovable, but the stern began to break up by the violence *of the waves*. 42 And the soldiers' counsel was to kill the prisoners, lest any *of them* should swim out, and escape. 43 But the centurion, desiring to save Paul, stayed them from their purpose; and commanded that they who could swim should cast themselves overboard, and get first to the land; 44 and the rest, some on planks, and some on *other* things from the ship. And so it came to pass, that they all escaped safe to the land.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

I. The Shipwreck, 27.27-44.
  1. Nearing Land, 27-29.
  2. A Plot Frustrated, 30-32.
  3. Paul the Encourager, 33-38.
  4. Shipwrecked but Saved, 39-44.
II. On the Island of Melita, 28.1-10.
  1. Paul and the Viper, 1-6.
  2. Paul Entertained by Publius, 7-10.

39. *They knew not the land.* Valleta was the harbor of Malta visited by Alexandrian ships; the part of the coast where they now were was unknown to the sailors.

Ship Anchored by Stern

40. *Loosing the bands of the rudders.* They were paddle-shaped rudders, one on each side of the stern. "They had been drawn out of the water and lashed to the ship's side; these lashings were now loosened, and the rudders let down into the water in order to steer the vessel."

41. *The foreship struck and remained unmovable.* "The ship struck a bottom of mud, graduating into tenacious clay, into which the forepart would fix itself, and be held fast, while the stern was exposed to the force of the waves" (*James Smith*).

42. *The soldiers' counsel was to kill the prisoners lest any of them should escape.* "Paul, of course, occupied a very different position from the other prisoners. He was a man of distinction, a Roman citizen who had appealed for a trial to the supreme court of Rome.

The others had been in all probability condemned to death, and were going to supply the perpetual demand which Rome made on the provinces for human victims to amuse the populace by their death in the arena" (*Ramsay*). The soldiers were answerable with their own lives for the safe-keeping of the prisoners. Herod ordered the guards of the prison put to death from which Peter made his escape, Acts 12.19, and the jailor was on the point of killing himself when the earthquake occurred and he thought Paul and Silas and the other prsioners had escaped, Acts 16.27.

44. *They all escaped safe to land.* "The world is right when, seeing Paul and a whole shipload of other people wrecked upon the coast of Malta, it has wholly forgotten or never cared who the other people were, but has seized the shipwrecked Paul and set him among the heroes. It was not the shipwreck, but the idea that shone through the shipwreck, that made his heroism. The roar of the breakers and the crash of the ship were but the emphasis. The essential force and meaning was in the great apostle's faith" (*Phillips Brooks*).

1, 2. *We know that this island is called Melita.* This they learned from the inhabitants.—*Barbarians.* Not *barbarous people,* as in the A. V. The word does not mean "uncivilized". The Greeks and Romans called all who did not speak the Greek or Latin language, Barbarians, just as members of Greek-letter fraternities today call all the students who are not fraternity members, Barbarians or Barbs. The inhabitants of Malta were probably of Phœnician or Carthaginian descent, and spoke the Punic language with perhaps a mixture of Greek. The word "barbarians" came from the fact that to the Greek the language of non-Greek speaking people sounded like "Ba-ba".

3. *A viper came out by reason of the heat, and fastened on his hand.* "The viper was probably in a torpid state, and was restored to activity by the heat. It was now cold, in consequence both of the storm and the lateness of the season, and such reptiles become torpid as soon as the temperature falls sensibly below the mean temperature of the place which they inhabit. Vipers, too, lurk in rocky places, and that is the character of the region where the incident occurred. They are accustomed to dart at their enemies, sometimes several feet at a bound; and hence the one mentiond here could reach the hand of Paul as he stood near the fire" (*Hackett*).

4, 5. *No doubt this man is a murderer.* Compare Lk. 12.1-5; Jn. 9.1-3. "Paul got into this trouble because, with his usual vigor, he had gathered the sticks to make the fire. Those who stood by and did nothing ran no risk, but enjoyed the heat of the fire once it was lighted. Such are the critics, generally speaking, the people who gather no material for kindling and reinvigorating blaze; those who stand by while others do the work, and pass comments on the methods and the result."—*Took no harm.* See Mk. 16.18.

6. *Fallen down dead suddenly.* "Trembling she stood, and on the sudden dropped", are the words in which Shakespeare tells the effect on Cleopatra of the asp's bite.—*Said that he was a god.* See Acts 14.11-15.

7. *The chief man of the island.* The Greek means literally, *the first man.* πρῶτος μελιταίων, the First of the Melitans, has been found on inscriptions.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

4. *Whom Justice hath not suffered to live.* "It was the tendency not only of the barbarian but of the 'religious' Athenian mind to personify and deify qualities and attributes; thus the Athenians took 'the resurrection' for a deity, and as we speak of 'Providence' so the Maltese spoke of 'Justice.' The personification of the Δίκη, Justice, of Zeus, was common in the Greek poets. In Mythology she was reckoned as a goddess, being the daughter of Zeus and Themis." The current belief is expressed in these words from *The Wisdom of Solomon:* Because the spirit of the Lord hath filled the world, and that which holdeth all things together hath knowledge of every voice, therefore no man that uttereth unrighteous things shall be unseen; neither shall Justice, when it convicteth, pass him by. For in the midst of his counsels the ungodly shall be searched out, and the sound of his words shall come unto the Lord to bring to conviction his lawless deeds...For thine all-powerful hand, that created the world out of formless matter, lacked not means to send upon them a multitude of bears or fierce lions, or new created beasts, full of rage,...yea, and

without these might they have fallen by a single breath, being pursued by Justice, and scattered abroad by the breath of thy power.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. By whom had Paul been called a god and why? How did Paul meet this spirit? When before had Paul's life been saved by a Roman officer? With what Roman centurion had he had dealings?

The Shipwreck. Last week we left Paul standing in the midst of the rest of the crew and passengers, and bidding them all be of good cheer, for God had promised that all their lives would be spared. For many days they were tossed to and fro, their ship driven they knew not where. At midnight on the fourteenth night out from Fair Havens the glad cry of "Land!" was heard. Several soundings were taken and each time the water proved shallower. Fearing lest they might be headed for a rocky coast, they cast out four anchors from the stern and waited for daylight. The sailors under pretence of throwing out anchors from the foreship had lowered the small boat, and no one but Paul perceived their intention of making their escape in it. He sent word to the centurion of their plan, warning him that if the sailors made their escape the ship could not be managed and they would all perish. Promptly the soldiers cut the ropes of the boat and let her float away. Morning was near at hand, and Paul urged them all to take food, for in their danger and despair they had not eaten. Taking bread himself he gave thanks to God and began to eat. The others, two hundred and seventy-six there were in all aboard, took courage and followed his example. Then they lightened the ship by throwing out what remained of their cargo of grain.

When day dawned a sandy beach was seen in the midst of the rocky shore. It was determined to make an effort to beach the vessel there. The anchors were cut off, the rudders freed from their fastenings, and the foresail hoisted. The vessel moved forwards but soon her bow was firmly held in the mud a short distance from the shore, and her stern was broken up by the force of the waves. The soldiers wished to kill all the prisoners lest they should make their escape on reaching land, but this the centurion would not permit on Paul's account, and he commanded all who could swim to jump overboard and reach the land first, so as to help the others who made their escape on planks and fragments of the ship.

On the Isle of Malta. It was the island of Malta which they all thus reached in safety. The inhabitants treated them very kindly, making a fire on shore, for it was cold and raining. Paul busied himself in gathering sticks and throwing them on the fire, and the others were startled to see a viper that he had taken up with the sticks spring out of the pile and fasten on his hands. "He is a murderer", they said one to another, "he has indeed escaped death at sea, but now he receives his just punishment." But Paul calmly shook off the viper into the fire, and when he failed to fall down dead from its bite as they expected they changed their minds and said that he must be a god.

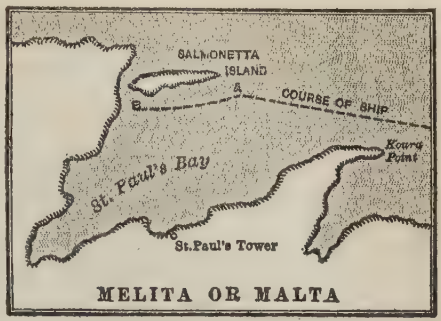
Publius, the chief man on the island, courteously entertained them for three days, and Paul repaid his kindness by curing the illness of his father. Other sick ones were brought to Paul and he healed them. When three months had passed all were able to continue the journey to Rome in a ship from Alexandria that had wintered in the chief harbor of the island, the things needful for the voyage having been put aboard for them by the grateful inhabitants of Malta.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Melita, now called Malta, is a Briitsh island near the middle of the Mediterranean, two hundred miles from the African coast, sixty miles from the island of Sicily. By referring to the Maltese cross and the "Knights of Malta", recall the part played by Malta in the Crusades. It is now very thickly populated.

The name of "St. Paul's Bay" has been given to the inlet on the north side of the island where it is believed the shipwreck occurred. It is spoken of as "the place where two seas met", and south of the small island of Salmonetta two currents, one from the east and the other from the north, meet where the ship was run aground. The probable course of the ship and place of shipwreck are shown on the diagram. Five miles away was the capital of the island,

now known as Citta Vechia, Old City. Here there is a cathedral which the priests claim is built on the site of the house of Publius, and there is a cave shown to credulous tourists as the abode of Paul while on the island.



A. Place Where Ship Was Anchored
B. Place Where Ship Was Beached

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Continued stories, you know, usually end each time at some exciting point of the narrative, and last week the story of our hero was no exception. The ship on which he was a prisoner had been driven to and fro for two weeks, it had been stripped of everything, no one knew where they were, crew and all the passengers save one had given up all hope, and were expecting death at any moment, and in the face of this seemingly certain end Paul had stood before them and urged them to be of good cheer, for God had promised that all lives should be spared. What happened soon after this? (See the Historical Background.)

For Older Pupils. On the morning of the Battle of Copenhagen it was the twenty-seventh chapter of Acts which Lord Nelson read for his daily Bible portion. Later in the day the currents prevented his getting his battleships into the position he wished. Then there flashed into his mind what was done on the ship on which Paul sailed on that memorable voyage to Rome. How many days had Paul's ship been tossed about before it drew near to land? What then was done? "Fearing lest happily we should be cast ashore on rocky ground, they let go four anchors from the stern, and wished for the day". These were the words that came to Lord Nelson's mind that afternoon, and he resolved to follow that example. He ordered anchors cast out of the stern of his ship. When this was done, the ship swung about as was purposed, the Danish fleet was destroyed in the roadstead, and a great victory was won. This twenty-seventh Chapter of Acts gives us the most important information we have concerning ancient seamanship.

LESSON THOUGHTS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I The Hour Reveals the Man

The Hour does not Make the Man. One sometimes hears it said that circumstances made General Grant, Abraham Lincoln, and other great leaders of men. It is true that opportunities came to such men, but they were ready for the opportunities. Opportunities equally great have come to other men, whose earlier life has not made them ready for high achievements, and they have passed them by. Sir Henry Havelock was twenty-eight when he entered the army of India, and he was sixty-two before the opportunity came to distinguish himself. During these thirty-four years of waiting he had made himself skilful in planning and ready for leadership, and then came the opportunity for that march to Lucknow which made him famous.

Whether one is ready for the hour of opportunity or emergency depends on the whole previous life, and the real testing time is not the critical moment itself, but all the apparently unimportant moments which precede it. The hour reveals, but does not make, the man. David was able to save the armies of Israel because he had learned to use his sling in his shepherd life. It was General Charles James Napier who said, "The smith who has to look for his hammer when the iron is red strikes too late; the hammer should be uplifted to fall like a thunderbolt while the white heat is in the metal."

The greatness of Paul as a man and as a leader is shown on this voyage to Rome. His brave endurance of hardship, his presence of mind in time of danger, his tireless activity, his unselfishness, his practical wisdom, his sym-

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pathy for others, his good cheer, and above all, his perfect trust in God, are brought out by the exciting scenes of peril. But all these qualities have been shown again and again in the record of his life given in the Acts, and in his own self-revelation in his letters. He was the foremost man on that ship, because he had lived the noblest life and had acquired the grandest character.

Todays are Made by Yesterdays. Moses will control our jurists tomorrow because he spent forty years in the desert reflecting upon the principles of justice. Paul had the honor to fashion our political institutions because he gave twelve years of general preparation and three years of special preparation to the study of individual rights. Milton tells us that he spent four and thirty years of solitary and unceasing study in accumulating his material for the heroic poem that the world would not willingly let die. Edward Everett tells us that Daniel Webster retired late and slept soundly the night before his celebrated reply to Haine. The next day the great statesman fronted the senate, having in his hand only a few headings of his speech. Seeking to explain the calm confidence of the orator, his biographer says: "A full hundred oratorical triumphs before him lent Webster confidence and intellectual momentum."

If we define a great nation as a people with a noble history lying back of it, let us define a great individual as a soul with years many and great lying back of him and lending him their intellectual and moral force. As the gardens of Italy have their treasures through the snows and the mineral stimulants that are washed down from the mountain sides, so man's todays are made rich and deep because many noble thoughts and purposes out of the yesterdays have poured down into his present. *Dr. N. D. Hillis,* in *A Man's Value to Society.*

In Training. The powers of the spiritual life must be kept in daily training in order that the unexpected trials may be met with an unshaken purpose. Carelessness in every day living weakens the reserve strength of the soul. To work conscientiously at each day's duty, to take pleasure in simple things, to abstain wholly from all the excesses of anger, impatience, discouragement and envy, to keep the soul steady by communion with God, and the exercise of persistent charity and kindliness of heart—this is to be in constant training for the sudden tests of spiritual strength and courage that come into every life. *Wellspring.*

Ready for an Emergency. "Not long ago," writes Miss McCracken in *The Outlook,* "an acquaintance to whom I had just told the good news of the continuous advancement of a mutual friend in her chosen occupation, said, in comment: 'It is not so much because she is brilliant that she succeeds as it is because she is always prepared for emergencies, however great.'

"'Or small,' I added. 'You are thinking of the magnet,' was the quick reply.

"'The magnet?' I questioned.

"'Yes,' my acquaintance explained. 'One day at college one of the other girls dropped her eyeglasses in a narrow opening between two walls. She couldn't reach them, and had very nearly decided that they must remain permanently out of reach. Our successful friend happened to remember that their frame was made of steel. She went to the physical laboratory, borrowed a magnet, tied a string to it, and lowering it carefully into the opening, gravely drew up the eyeglasses.'"

Miss McCracken, who was making a study of American college women, passed along the anecdote from one institution to another in the course of her investigations, and at each it elicited the same comment: "How like a college girl!"

II Hospitality

Hospitality in Ancient Times. From the day when Abraham welcomed the three strangers who came to his tent, onward throughout the Old Testament times, we see the need then existing for entertaining strangers, and the exhortations in the New Testament,—as in Romans Paul urges the duty of "communicating to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality" and in his First Epistle Peter exhorts the Christians to use "hospitality one to another without murmuring"—show that the duty continued to exist. In the primitive church a Christian on arriving as a stranger in a city went at once to the church and among the members there he was sure of a welcome and of free entertainment. Since human nature is the same in all ages, this generous

hospitality was abused, and then it became customary for the Christian to carry with him a letter from his own church which admitted him to the confidence and care of the churches elsewhere. Our word *hospital* meant at first *guest house* (Latin *hospitalis,* from *hospes,* a stranger or guest), and was given to buildings erected near the large churches for the entertainment of strangers. It is interesting to recall that such hospitality often led to lasting friendships, indicated by the exchange of the *tessera hospitalis,* or hospitality tokens. These tokens were pieces of wood or stone which were broken in two, and exchanged after each one had written a name on the piece he received. The fitting together of the pieces covered the validity of a claim for hospitality made by their descendants.

The Hospitality of the Melitans. Luke seems to have been somewhat surprised at the hospitality received from people who spoke another language and were neither Jews nor Greeks, and therefore to him barbarians. They showed us no common kindness, he says, and he recalls how they received them and built a fire for them, because it was cold and raining, and how Publius, the chief man of the island, entertained them courteously for three days, and how when they were about to sail away three months later the people put on board their ship the things needful for their voyage.

Recent Hospitality in Malta. During the Arabi rebellion in Egypt, when many Christians were massacred, Mrs. Layyah Barakat secured passage at Alexandria on board a ship bound for Malta. In "A Message from Mount Lebanon," Mrs. Barakat gives her experience on the way and on reaching the island. "Our bed was on the deck of the vessel; our coverlet, the high waves of the Mediterranean Sea which washed across us. All day I would sit in the sun to dry my clothes; then after the sun went down the heavy breakers would rise again, and again I would be wet to the skin. Yet, in thankfulness for our deliverance we felt that God was leading us and that the future was in his hand.

At last, strangers in a strange land, we arrived at the island of Malta. That first afternoon in Malta was a dreary time for me. I took my little baby and went out by the sea, and as I sat there thinking of the past I could not help the tears. Homesick, hungry, alone in a strange town, I could see in all the world nothing but darkness. But as I sat there, there passed me an English nurse with a sweet baby in a little coach. She stopped and began to talk to me. I could understand part of what she said, though I was unable to answer. She stayed only a moment, then passed on; but in a short time she returned, and, putting my baby in the now empty coach, requested me to follow her.

In a very few minutes I found myself in a beautiful home, the residence of one of the British officers in the island. The lady who received me there was a Christian woman; I could see it in her face as soon as I looked at her. When she found out that we were refugees from Egypt she was very sympathetic, and showed it in act as well as word, providing a dress and a pair of shoes for me and also for my little girl, as well as some other much-needed clothing. As I left her house she put two English pounds into my hand, patted me kindly on the shoulder, and begged me not to cry. "God will provide," she said. The relief and encouragement that her goodness brought to me I cannot describe.

Receiving Strangers. The direction familiarly given is that we should meet strangers half-way. But I do not find that this wholly answers. These strangers may be represented by globules of quicksilver, or, indeed, of water, on a marble table. Suppose you pour out two little globules of quicksilver at each of two points. Suppose you make the globules just so large that they meet half-way, thus, ∞. At the point where they touch they only touch. It even seems as if there was a little repulsion so that they shrink away from each other. But, if we will enlarge one of the drops ever so little, so that it shall meet the other a very little beyond half-way, the two will gladly run together into one, and will even forget that they ever have been parted. That is a true rule for meeting strangers. Meet them a little more than half-way. You will find in life that the people who do this are the people everywhere prized and loved. *Edward Everett Hale.*

Christ's Example. It does not seem quite right when two or three or a dozen people are living lives that are warm and bright that they should spend a good part of their time beaming on each other. Christ did undoubtedly do a little of that in that beautiful Bethany home of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus; he

beamed on them and they beamed on him, and on very rare occasions, as it would seem, did what some of us do all the time, had a beautiful and comfortable time enjoying people that were thoroughly congenial to him. But that was not the way he lived. We, some of us, live so. We, some of us, never beam except on people that beam on us. We have beaming dinner-parties, beaming sociables, beaming receptions, and the like.

Christ's conception of Christianity was of something whereby the strong helped the weak, not helped those who were strong and so needed no help; something whereby those that were warm gathered around their fireplaces those that were cold, not those that had been comfortably heated by sitting at a comfortable fireplace of their own; something whereby those that were bright and cheery embraced with their hospitality those that were lonely and despondent, not those that were already so luminous and glad as to make more of the same an extravagance and a superfluity. *Dr. Charles H. Parkhurst.*

III Under God's Protection

A Lesson from a Chinese Christian. In the city of Hwoa Chia, China, Miss MacIntosh rented a building where she might stay during her monthly visits and hold meetings with the women. Being the only white person in the city, and the only one who could speak English, it was rather lonely for her, at best, and an occasional snake crawling about the floor did not add to her comfort. Neither did the landlord's special message.

"Tell the foreign missionary," he said, "not to be frightened. The whole floor underneath is a nest of snakes, and they are quite at home. She had better not kill one; they would all be out to see about it."

"Don't you remember," her native helper asked, "when Paul took up that snake that wound itself around his hand, and the heathen all stood about and expected to see his hand swollen up and to see him die? Don't you think God can keep you safely here?"

"Oh, yes," Miss MacIntosh replied; "if I didn't believe that I would never be here". So she lived ten days with the snakes, unharmed.—*Wide-Awake.*

Hindu Reasoning. In the shop of a zealous Hindu at Simla, there hangs a collection box on which is printed in Hindu, Urdu, and English, "Cows Supporting Fund." The money collected is used to support cows that are too weak to work, or cows that have been purchased from Mohammedan butchers. Hindus think that they will be rewarded for preventing cows from being butchered, but when some one asked how the Hindu orphans were supported the answer was: "Why should we support them? They must have done something very bad in a former life to be overtaken by such a punishment".

He is a God. Near the middle of the last century, David Brainerd had heard of a savage tribe in the heart of the New Jersey forests, and yearned to bring them under Christian influences. He pushed on through the wilderness till he found himself near their village, and stopped to rest and fortify himself for the new undertaking before him.

When he finally reached the wigwams, he was an astonished man. His faith and hope had made him bold, but he little expected when he faced the enemies of his race that a "whole village" would come out to meet him as if he had been a long-looked-for friend. Led by their chief, the Indians welcomed him as their guest, and seemed almost to reverence him as a prophet. He stayed among them and preached, winning their hearts and the faith of the untutored natives, until he gathered a church of between seventy and eighty Christian Indians.

Brainerd never knew, until they told him, the secret of his welcome. The savages had discovered the white stranger in the woods, and a party of them had waited to steal upon him and kill him as soon as he entered his tent. Peering between the folds of the canvas, they saw him on his knees, praying.

Ignorant wonder held them back, and their wonder turned to awe when they saw a rattlesnake crawl over the stranger's feet and pause beside him, with its head raised as if to strike; but it only gazed at him a moment, flickered its red tongue, and glided out of the tent on the opposite side. The Indians hurried back and reported that the white man was under the protection of the Great Spirit.

However much the superstition of these "children of nature" influenced their thought, they told a Christian truth in pagan version. It is certain that

"Man is immortal till his work is done,"

and God had work for Brainerd to do. *Youth's Companion.*

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

A number of ministers were once speaking of special causes for thanksgiving, each one narrating some peril from which he had escaped, when Archbishop Whitely quietly remarked: "I have a story that eclipses yours, and I have even greater reason than you to thank God. I was never on a flaming vessel, was never subjected to short rations, and was never shipwrecked". Do you see how much Paul had to be thankful for in having escaped the perils of the sea and death at the hands of the soldiers, but do you fail to see the causes for thankfulness that are yours? Forget not all his benefits, the Psalmist counsels.

Paul was the leader on that voyage because he had prepared himself for leadership. His prayer for safety received an answer because he knew how to prevail with God in prayer. He was full of courage and cheer because he had lived a life of trust in God. How are you preparing for the time of trouble?

Paul did not think it beneath the dignity of a leader of men to gather sticks for the bonfire to cheer his fellow sufferers. The great are never above doing things for others.

Our Prayer. On land or sea, in storm or calm, make us of good cheer, Heavenly Father, because we put our trust in thee. When tempted by storm and stress to lose hope, may the memory of thy unfailing care in the past nerve us to meet the crisis. Keep us at all times sane and sunny, our minds ready to grapple with the hard or the sudden problems which they have to meet, our spirits able to encourage others, our hands, like Paul's, ever ready for service.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The Shipwreck of Paul. See *The Outlook,* p. 282, Feb. 6, 1909; "Voyage and Shipwreck of St. Paul," by James Smith.
2. The hour reveals the man. See the first topic.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. What did Jesus say in the Sermon on the Mount about judging? (Mt. 7.1-5.) 2. What did Jesus say about the sin of one who causes others to stumble? (Mt. 18.6.) 3. Who said that "no man liveth unto himself"? 4. What is said in John 16.7-13 about the Holy Spirit being the guide of conscience?

Questions to Think About. 1. Explain verse 13. (*Guide,* p. 424.) 2. Explain the last clause of verse 15. (*Guide,* p. 425.) 3. Explain verse 16. (*Guide,* p. 425.) 4. Explain verse 22. (*Guide,* p. 425.) 5. Of whose welfare must a Christian think? 6. How does the Golden Rule apply to the thought of the lesson? 7. Is the conscience always right in its decisions? 8. How must it be educated? 9. Is it ever right to act contrary to the dictates of conscience? Why? 10. What are some of the things which are harmful to eat or drink? 11. What are some of your rights which you ought not to use? 12. Should a legal right ever be given to do a moral wrong? 13. When is the use of wine wrong? 14. Are there any stumbling-blocks in the way of people in your town who are intemperate? 15. If so, what is your duty in the matter? 16. Is it right for a Christian to own shares of brewery stock? 17. Make a list of all the good things that can be said for the use of tobacco. Make another list of all the evil things that can be laid to its use. 18. Find facts about the magnitude and the cost of the liquor business.

Questions upon the Epistle to the Romans. (See pp. 37-40 of our Introduction.) 1. Recall what you learned in the first quarter about the occasion for the letter and its appearance. 2. What is the character of the letter? 3. Into what two great divisions does it naturally fall? 4. How does it rank as literature? 5. What are its lessons for today?

Memory and Note-Book Work. Memorize Rom. 14.13-15.3. Write Chapter XXI, Shipwrecked at Malta.

WORLD'S TEMPERANCE SUNDAY

Golden Text

It is good not to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor to do anything whereby thy brother stumbleth. Romans 14.21

LESSON Romans 14.13-15.3 MEMORIZE verses 14.16, 17

14 13 Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge ye this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock in his brother's way, or an occasion of falling. 14 I know, and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus, that nothing is unclean of itself: save that to him who accounteth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. 15 For if because of meat thy brother is grieved, thou walkest no longer in love. Destroy not with thy meat him for whom Christ died. 16 Let not then your good be evil spoken of: 17 for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. 18 For he that herein serveth Christ is well-pleasing to God, and approved of men. 19 So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another. 20 Overthrow not for meat's sake the work of God. All things indeed are clean; howbeit it is evil for that man who eateth with offense. 21 It is good not to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor *to do anything* whereby thy brother stumbleth. 22 The faith which thou hast, have thou to thyself before God. Happy is he that judgeth not himself in that which he approveth. 23 But he that doubteth is condemned if he eat, because *he eateth* not of faith; and whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

15 1 Now we that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. 2 Let each one of us please his neighbor for that which is good, unto edifying. 3 For Christ also pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell upon me.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

I. The Right Use of Christian Liberty, 14.13-23.
II. The Strong must Act in the Spirit of Christ, 15.1-3.

13. *Let us not therefore judge one another any more. Therefore,* in view of God's judgment, verse 12. See verse 3 and Mt. 7.1. "If we are intolerant, we become intolerable" (*Morrison*).—*Judge ye this rather.* Note the play upon words here, and compare, 12.3, 14; 13.1. Instead of thinking about your brother's conduct and condemning it (verse 10), think about your own conduct and see that it does not cause another to sin. See 1 Cor. 8.8-13.—*Stumbling-block.* See Mt. 18.6; 1 Cor. 8.8-13.—*Or an occasion of falling.* This and the preceding expression, "a stumbling-block in his brother's way," are seemingly synonymous, though the first may be taken to mean a hindrance and the second something that actually throws a brother down in life's course. See Rom. 9.33; Lev. 19.14.

14. *I know, and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus.* As a Pharisee of the Pharisees" Paul had strictly kept all the Levitical law (Lev. 11) which forbade the eating of certain animals; his knowledge that nothing is unclean of itself had come to him through his fellowship with Jesus Christ. Compare Mt. 7.1-23; Acts 10.15; Jn. 2.24.—*Unclean.* The Greek word κοινόν means literally *common* —such food was common to the world, but forbidden to the pious Jew. Recall the lesson about Peter's vision on the housetop.—*Of itself.* In its own nature.—*To him it is unclean.* "Mistaken conscience calls for correction by better light, but never by violation. To follow conscience is, by itself, no security that we are doing what is in itself right, but to violate conscience, which is our actual view of right and wrong, is always wrong" (*Moule,* quoted by *Dummelow*).

15. *For.* The connection is that you must respect another's scruple, even if it

"That no Man put a Stumbling-block in his Brother's Way or an Occasion of Falling"

Rom. 14.13

"For the Kingdom of God is not Eating and Drinking but Righteousness and Peace and Joy in the Holy Spirit"

Rom. 14.17

TEMPERANCE (BURNE-JONES)

(Pouring water upon the flames and trampling upon them with unharmed feet)

seems to you a foolish one, for is, etc.—*Thy brother is grieved.* "It is a hurt to his conscience." See Light from Oriental Life.—*Thou walkest no longer in love.* Love is the test in conduct: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.—*Destroy not with thy meat him for whom Christ died.*—Compare 1 Cor. 8, 10, 11. For the sake of a little self-indulgence in eating you may be in danger of destroying one for whom Christ suffered and died. "Do not think more of your food than Christ thought of his life" (*Bengel*). "No one can clearly see his rights who is blind to his duties."

16. *Let not your good be evil spoken of.* If you exercise your good (your Christian liberty, your right to eat anything), and thereby offend another whose conscience will not allow him to eat it, then others will speak evil of your liberty. It is too great a price to pay for a matter of so little importance. "There are two freedoms, the false where a man is free to do as he likes, and the true where he is free to do as he ought" (*Kingsley*).

17. This verse distinguishes what is unimportant and what is important.—*The kingdom of God.* Christianity: the reign of Christ over man.—*Eating and drinking.* Let them stand for the unimportant things in Church doctrine.—*Righteousness and health and joy in the Holy Spirit.* These are the important matters.—*Righteousness.* Right-dealing.—*In the Holy Spirit.* Through his indwelling.

19. *So then.* The conclusion from the words of verses 17 and 18 is that we must consider what effect our conduct will have on others.—*Let us follow.* Many ancient authorities read *we follow,* RVm.—*Edify.* Improve.

20. *Overthrow not for meat's sake the word of God.* Overthrow, pull down, is the opposite of edify, build up. Possibly some of the "strong" Christians were on the point of disrupting the Church of Rome over the unimportant question of "meat".—*The word of God.* "The Christian brother, whose Christian personality is God's word" (*Vincent*).—*All this—howbeit.* The same assertion of a general truth followed by an exception as is made in verse 14.—*Who eateth with offence.* Whose eating offends his own conscience.

21. *Stumbleth.* Many ancient authorities add *or is offended, or is weak,* RVm. Compare the Golden Rule and the Two Great Commandments.

22. *The faith which thou hast.* The enlightened faith, which permits thee to see that all things are clean.—*Have thou to thyself before God.* Do not proclaim it so as to offend others.

23. *He that doubteth is condemned if he eat.* If we must excuse ourselves, we accuse ourselves.—*Whatsoever is not of faith is sin.* Whatsoever is not done because one believes it to be right.

15.1. *We that are strong...weak.* Let those who have no scruples be patient with those who have them.

15.2. *Unto edifying. Edify* comes from the Latin *edificare,* to build up. Webster's definition of edifying is "to instruct and improve, especially in moral and religious knowledge". The pleasing of a neighbor must be such as will promote his good. "All comes back to this at last, How shall we best promote the divine life in ourselves and others? The divine life is the source of all truly righteous conduct; the divine life is the standard by which all conduct is to be tested" (*Abbott*).

15.3. *As it is written.* In Ps. 69.9, where is described the sufferings of the righteous man at the hands of the wicked, and therefore, especially applicable to the Righteous One. Compare also 2 Cor. 8.9.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

13. *Put a stumblingblock in his brother's way.* We can imagine the bustle in the *macellun,* the bazaar of the butchers, where the different kinds of meat cause anxious Christians terrible scruples of conscience; afterwards again, when the meat, which perhaps came from a pagan offering to idols, is served as a roast in the home of a pagan it may cause embarrassment to a Christian who may happen to be hidden to the feast. We see the "strong" Christian showing off his enlightenment and actually sharing the banquet in the pagan temple—a stumblingblock to the "weak" brother, who watches him with venomous look, and who, though "weak in faith", is strong in "judging" and "speaking evil". *Adolf Deissmann.*

14. *To him it is unclean.* Here is the translation of a letter which was found in the Egyptian rubbish heaps. "Antonius, son of Ptolemæus, invites you to dine with him at the table of Lord Serapis in the house of Claudius Serapion on the sixteenth at three o'clock." Though held in a private home, his dinner was "at the table of Lord Serapis", the most widely worshipped god of the Egyptians. You can understand, observes Professor Moulton, how it was that Christians were so unpopular in those early days. For a Christian could not accept an invitation to go out to dinner without compromising his faith.

THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. 1. Who wrote the Epistle to the Romans? 2. Where was he when he wrote it? 3. What year was it? 4. What other letters did he write? 5. From which ones have we had lessons? 6. How did Peter learn that all meats are "clean"? 7. What did the Council at Jerusalem deem necessary for the Gentile churches to observe regarding things that had been sacrificed to idols? 8. What kind of conscience did Paul say he exercised himself to attain?

Why Paul Wrote to the Romans. You remember that when Paul was at Corinth and about to return to Jerusalem with the alms contributed by the Greek churches, he said that "After I have been there I must also see Rome". It was this contemplated visit which led him to write to the Christians in Rome to prepare them for his coming, to warn them against evil reports which might have reached them, and also to counsel them in matters wherein he knew they needed guidance.

One of these matters concerned the eating of meat. Jesus had abolished the old distinction between lawful and unlawful meat: in Mark we read, "Perceive ye not, that whatsoever from without goeth into the man, it cannot defile him? This he said, making all meats clean". Peter had been told in a vision "What God hath cleansed, make not thou common". The Council at Jerusalem had declared in their letter to the Christians at Corinth that they should abstain from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from (things) strangled.

When the question arose at Corinth as to whether the Gentile Christians could partake with their heathen friends of meat which had been offered to idols, Paul disregarded the decree of the Council at Jerusalem, to which he at that time evidently agreed. He had advanced in knowledge since then. He decided that to do this was not wrong in itself, for all meat was God's gift, but that the Christians should abstain from eating it for the sake of those whose consciences held it to be wrong. These latter Paul called "the weak in the faith", but their scrupulous convictions were to be carefully tolerated by the "strong" brethren. A somewhat similar question arose, it seems, at Rome. Paul did not approve of the scruples of those who objected to the eating of meat, but he counseled those who believed as he did to forego their own right to eat rather than to lead their "weaker" brothers to violate their consciences by eating of meat also. To eat meat was not a sin, but to go against one's conscience (though wrong) was a sin. This is the theme—Abstinence for the sake of others—which is ours for our World's Temperance Sunday.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

Have you Paul's boundless sympathy for the weak? Have you a pupil who is satisfied that he knows what God requires of man, and regards intolerantly all who differ from him? Can you regard him charitably and help him grow into the attitude of Paul? Can you make allowances for another's narrowness or uncharitableness, deal patiently and tactfully with his unreasonableness or stupidity or weakness?

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. A big dog once taught Professor Dager a lesson. He had taken a long walk through the country, and this dog had gone with him, and easily jumped from bank to bank of a deep gully they crossed, but on this particular day the dog refused to cross in this way. Instead, he ran a quarter of a mile to a spot where he could go down a path and then up on the other side and back again to Professor Dager. What do you suppose was

the reason for this? There was a little dog with him this time, and he knew that if he jumped across the little dog would try it and would fall in, so he took the trouble to go that long way around for the sake of his small companion. This is the lesson that Paul teaches in the words of his letter to the Romans that we study today, that we must sometimes give up our own comfort or pleasure for the sake of others who would be harmed if we did not deny ourselves.

For Older Pupils. What does *prophylaxis* mean? Among the laws recorded in Deuteronomy there is one which aims to prevent loss of life from falling from the roof of a house. What is it? "When thou buildest a new house, then thou shalt make a battlement for thy roof, that thou bring not blood upon thy house, if any man fall from thence." The owner who failed to obey this law was held responsible for the death of one who might fall from his roof. He might be strong and steady and in no danger of falling himself, but that fact did not free him from responsibility for a weaker man. This is the lesson that Paul taught the Romans: however strong they might be, safe at any height, they must build battlements for the sake of their weaker brethren.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Abstinence for the Sake of Others

Destroy not with thy Meat Him for whom Christ Died. I may feel at perfect liberty to drink wine. Had I only myself to consider, and knowing that my temptation does not lie that way, I might use wine regularly or as often as I felt disposed to enjoy a needed stimulant. I may feel quite convinced in my own mind that morally I am not one whit the worse for doing so. But I can not determine whether I am to indulge myself or not without considering the effect my conduct will have on others. There may be among my friends some who know that their temptation does lie that way, and whose conscience bids them altogether refrain. If by my example such persons are encouraged to silence the voice of their own conscience, then I incur the incalculable guilt of helping to destroy a brother for whom Christ died. *Dr. Marcus Dods.*

In his earlier years Rudyard Kipling was wont to say, "There is no harm in liquor, taken moderately". Then one night he saw two young girls made drunk by two men in a concert hall, and he wrote this confession: "My own demand for beer helped to send those two girls reeling down the dark street. It is not good that we should let it lie before the eyes of children, and I have been a fool in writing to the contrary. Better is it that a man would go without his beer in public places than to bring temptation to the lips of young fools such as the four I had seen."

The Influence of Example. "But," says one, "what good can I do by signing the pledge? I never drink, even without signing." The question has already been asked and answered more than a million times. Let it be answered once more. For the man suddenly, or in any other way, to break off from the use of drams, who has indulged in them for a long course of years, and until his appetite for them has grown ten or a hundred-fold stronger, and more craving than any natural appetite can be, requires a most powerful moral effort. In such an undertaking he needs every moral support and influence that can possibly be brought to his aid and thrown around him. And not only so, but every moral prop should be taken from whatever argument might rise in his mind to lure him to his backsliding.

But it is said by some that men will think and act for themselves; that none will disuse spirits or anything else because his neighbors do; and that moral influence is not that powerful engine contended for. Let us examine this. Let me ask the man who could maintain this position most stiffly, what compensation he will accept to go to church some Sunday and sit during the sermon with his wife's bonnet upon his head? Not a trifle, I'll venture, and why not? There would be nothing irreligious in it, nothing immoral, nothing uncomfortable; then why not? Is it not because there would be something egregiously unfashionable in it? Then it is the influence of fashion; and what is the influence of fashion but the influence that other people's actions have on our actions—the strong inclination each of us feels to do as we see all our neighbors do? Nor is the influence of fashion confined to any particular thing or class of things; it is

just as strong on one subject as another. Let us make it as unfashionable to withhold our names from the temperance cause as for husbands to wear their wives' bonnets to church, and instances will be just as rare in the one case as the other. *Abraham Lincoln.*

An Instance of Wonderful Self-Control for the Sake of Others. Two hundred feet above the East River two men were working on the Manhattan Tower of the Queensboro Bridge. Ten feet below, half a dozen workmen were engaged, and farther down others, perhaps a score in all, toiled each at his particular task. A steel beam of several tons' weight was lowered, on the day in question, to its proper position, the business of the two men being to guide it into place. Before the great weight of steel could be securely fastened it began to slip, and the efforts of the men were powerless to keep it from sliding toward the open space below. They had only to stand out of the way to see many of their fellow-workmen crushed to death. An instant for decision, and one brave fellow gasped: "I'll stick to it if you will". The other nodded, and the two held on grimly until their fellow-workmen could swarm up the ladders and again attach the derrick to the mighty beam. In the meantime a hand of each of the heroes had been ground off at the wrist. Why don't men do the easier things of self-control for their brothers' sakes? *Harper's Weekly.*

A Word to Parents. In one of Tennessee's cities a special friend of mine walked down to the Tennessee river with two bright, promising boys. He said: "Boys, we will try a swim together". And with his boys at his side they swam together out toward the current of the river. Away out in the current the father called a halt and advised a return, but as they turned to go back to the shore the waters proved too swift, the distance too great, and the two boys sank by his side. He swam to the shore, piteously crying, "My boys are gone." He said: "The mistake I made was, I swam out too far with the boys". I am talking to men who are swimming out into the current of social life and amusements and dissipation with their bright boys at their side. Some of these days they will call a halt and start back to the shores of sobriety and piety; but the boys will be carried off with the current, and they will walk the shores of life sad and lonely, breathing from their broken hearts the saddest of all sentences! "My boys are gone! my boys are gone!" *Dr. George R. Stuart,* in an *Address at Northfield.*

II Causing Others to Stumble

Let not Your Good be Evil Spoken of. We not only need to be right, but we require judgment in the expression of righteousness; we need not only to be good and true, but we are to be cautious lest anything in our spirit or manner dim the brightness, mar the beauty, qualify the force, of the indwelling reality. We need to be careful about the manifestation of our religion, as we are careful about the essence, reality, depth of it. It is quite possible to be very good, really quite superior in mind and principle and aim, and yet to act in such a way that we offend all who know us, and altogether put them out of conceit with religion itself. There is a well-known book entitled "Roses; How to Grow and How to Show them". Anybody might say, "Ah! the question is, how to grow them. Let us know that, never mind the showing of them. Bring your flower into fulness of glory, and it will show itself and win the prize." But I have no doubt the writer of that book has much to say about the science of showing, and for want of this particular skill it is easy to imagine that many a clever grower has missed the prize. So it is with character. A man may be substantially deeply right and noble and pure, and yet exhibit himself in the most unfortunate light; he may do the utmost discredit to himself and to his Master. So we have not only to see that the root of the matter is in us, to grow the graces, but having grown them we must study to show them to the glory of the heavenly Flower Master.

Let us not despise this matter. Do not say, Let us get the solid thing, and never mind the rest. A jeweller works altogether with gold and gems; but it is not enough to mix these anyhow; the goldsmith, of all men, must be an artist, with a fine eye for elegance of form and harmony of color, or he will succeed in making gold unpleasant and diamonds vulgar. So we, as Christians, must be careful how we arrange our precious material, for of the virtues we may make

an eyesore or a picture. We must work with judgment, sympathy, courtesy, or our good will be evil spoken of. The spices are all sweet, but they must be mixed with the skill of the apothecary; the gems are all bright, but they must be ordered with taste if they are to be fashioned into a breastplate of beauty and glory. "So let your light shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven." Look at the modern table-lamp, what a picture they have made of it. Beautiful tiles for the ornamentation of the base, its polished brass standard, large handsome shades of satin and silk and lace, a wealth of color and elegance are lavished on the lamp, and it is altogether the most exquisite and pleasing object in the room. How different it would be if you were simply to set your light on a rough candlestick or in a rude lanthorn! So it is with men of character; one with much merit is somehow most displeasing, while another so lets his light shine that it is delightful to be in the neighborhood, and men give thanks to God for such a witness. *Condensed* from *Noon Day Addresses,* by *Dr. W. L. Watkinson.*

For the Kingdom of God is Joy in the Holy Spirit. Is it true in your case? Or have those outside the kingdom a right here to speak evil of your good? The Rev. Mark Guy Pearse thinks they have. "Joy is too much talked of and sung about as the sole possession of Christian people", he observes. "The Church is always looking pitifully on the world and telling it: 'Ah, you cannot gather grapes off your thorns, nor figs off your thistles.' 'Well,' asks the world, 'will you allow me the pleasure of looking into your more favored garden?' And one glance is enough! 'Your apple trees bear only crabs. Your fig trees nothing but leaves. Your grapes are sour.'"

In his Journal John Wesley wrote: Religion is love and joy and peace in the Holy Ghost; the cheerfulest thing in the world; it is inconsistent with moroseness, sourness, and with what is not according to the gentleness of Christ Jesus.

Dwight L. Moody's Belief. I believe more people stumble over the inconsistencies of professed Christians than from any other cause. What is doing more harm to the cause of Christ than all the scepticism in the world is this cold, dead formalism, this conformity to the world, this professing what we do not possess.

III Individual Liberty and Mutual Responsibility

True Liberty. It is easy enough to argue for those Roman Christians who believed with Paul that there is nothing wrong in itself in eating meat that had been offered to idols. "My conscience is clear," such a one might say, "I know I am doing nothing wrong. If another man thinks it unlawful to eat such meat let him abstain. Why should my rights be interfered with? It is my own personal affair whether I eat or don't eat." Have you not heard similar arguments in regard to the right of drinking intoxicating liquor? What does Paul say? He does not deny their "rights", but he would have them enjoy the glorious liberty of the children of God who are free to do what is right others considered, in contrast with that liberty where he is free to do what is right himself alone considered. True liberty always involves restraint.

The Higher Court. Young people in their enthusiasm sometimes make the mistake of trying to weigh all actions in the scale of right and wrong, as if this were the highest standard of judgment. "Show me," they say, "that a thing is right and I will stand by it though the heavens fall; or show me that it is wrong, and I am ready to renounce it without hesitation."

But it does not need much experience in life to convince one that there are a multitude of actions not so easily labeled as belonging to the right hand or the left, and the perplexity grows when one sees excellent people, whose honesty can not be questioned, arriving at so widely different conclusions.

It is not the great questions that perplex the young Christian, but the many small and seemingly unimportant decisions that he is constantly called upon to make unless he is satisfied simply to drift with the tide, and do what others do; and just here is where the wisdom of the higher court comes in. It is not a new tribunal. Paul went to it for counsel, and endorsed its authority. He found in his own experience that it might not always be wise to do things that in themselves were not wrong, and he gave two standards by which he judged them.

"All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient; all things are

lawful for me, but all things edify not." Here are two of the many fine, expressive words whose root meaning we have almost lost out of sight since the time of King James's translation. *Expedire* was literally "to free the feet"—and the things that were expedient were those which hastened the running, which urged forward, which removed impediments.

It is not necessary for me to prove to myself or others that a thing is in itself evil, and therefore wrong; I need only consider whether it will help me in pressing toward the mark, or whether on the whole it is likely to hinder my running by damaging my equipment—my power of body and brain, my physical and mental vigor, my clearness of perception of right and wrong, my influence with others. Will it be a wise investment or a waste of my time and my money? If it is called recreation, does it re-create or exhaust by unhealthy excitement?

The other figure through which Paul defines the judgment of the higher court is also one that he loves, the figure of a building. "All things are lawful for me, but all things *edify not.*" Here is the old word with the old meaning, from the same root as "edifice", *edificare,* to build up, and especially referring to the building of a temple. Paul wrote to the Corinthians, "Ye are God's building"; "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God?" and so, after putting aside the lawful things that are not expedient, do not free the feet for the race, he turns to the figure of the building, and rejects lawful things that do not edify.

A great many words have been wasted in trying to make universal law. Why not let that go for the present, and see how many of our individual perplexities can be settled by this court whose authority Paul recognized? *Condensed* from an Article in *The Christian Endeavor World,* by *Dean Emily Huntington Miller.*

A Sacrifice Hit. I hope that all you boys play baseball, and that many of you are on baseball teams. If you are, I suppose you know what is meant by a sacrifice hit. It is called a "sacrifice hit" when the score is close and a player comes to the bat, and, although he would like to make a run, nevertheless, for the sake of the man on the base, he make a "bunt", so that, while the pitcher or short-stop runs up to get the ball and put him out on first base, the man on the bases may make another base.

You see, then, that instead of making what is called a "grand-stand play" he just gives up his own glory for the sake of his team.

And after all, boys and girls, that is about the only way the world has ever moved very far ahead. Socrates, an old Greek, made a sacrifice hit when he was put to death in prison with poison, because he wanted to make the young men of Athens wiser. Martin Luther made a sacrifice hit when he went to Worms, although he feared the Pope would kill him. But he was determined to get liberty for the people. *Condensed* from *Fifty-two Story Talks,* by *Howard J. Chidley.*

Take Heed lest this Liberty of yours Become a Stumbling-Block. That is a very solemn warning. My liberty may trip some one into bondage. If life were an affair of one, my liberty might be wholesome, but it is an affair of many, and my liberty may be destructive to my fellows. I am not only responsible for my life, but for its influence. When a thing has been lived there is still the example to deal with. If orange-peel be thrown upon the pavement that is not the end of the feast. The man who slips over the peel is a factor in the incident, and my responsibility covers him.

I am, therefore, to consider both my deeds and their influence. How does my life trend when it touches my brother? In what way does he move because of the impact of my example? Towards liberty or towards license? To the swamps of transgression or to the fields of holiness? These are determining questions, and I must not seek to escape or ignore them. My brother is a vital part of my life. I must never shut him out of my sight. How is he influenced by my example? "If meat make my brother to stumble I will eat no flesh while the world standeth." *Dr. J. H. Jowett.*

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

We are good at claiming and maintaining our own rights; are we as careful to maintain the rights of others? We are loud upon the duties that others owe us; do we feel as strongly the duties we owe them? *Hugh Black.*

When conscience tells you that any course of conduct is not wrong in itself, that is not the end of the matter. Your conscience has yet other questions

to settle. What will be the influence on others if you follow that course? You are your neighbor's keeper whether you will or not. Can your neighbor do without violating his conscience what you can do without violating yours? Can he do with safety to himself what you can do with safety to yourself?

He who has no inclination toward intemperance should have sympathy for those who can remain temperate only through struggle, and should help them by example and by self-sacrificing effort.

Our Prayer.

If there be some weaker one,
Give me strength to help him on;
If a blinder soul there be,
Let me guide him nearer thee.
Make my mortal dreams come true
With the work I fain would do;
Clothe with life the weak intent,
Let me be the thing I meant;
Let me find in thy employ
Peace that dearer is than joy;
Out of self to love be led,
And to heaven acclimated,
Until all things sweet and good
Seem my nature's habitude. *John G. Whittier.*

SUGGESTIONS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. An up-to-date temperance lesson, based on clippings from magazines and newspapers. Put on the blackboard statistics, or diagrams, showing the progress of temperance legislation by States, and the cost of consumption of liquor. See "The Logic of Prohibition," by Dr. M. S. Hughes; "A Saloonless Nation by 1920," *World's Work*, June, 1915; "Nation-Wide Prohibition," *Atlantic Monthly*, June, 1915.

2. Paul's sympathy with weakness. See Dr. Watkinson's "Moral Paradoxes of St. Paul", pp. 96-119.

3. John Stuart Mill's dictum that "One's liberty ends when it begins to involve the possibility of ruin to one's neighbor" carried out in business life.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. Who was emperor of Rome A. D. 54-68? For what was he noted? 2. What did Paul say in Rom. 1.9-11; 15.22, 23 about his desire to visit Rome? 3. What occurred at Rome in the year 64 A. D.? 4. Locate the places named. 5. Find out what you can about Rome in the time of Nero. 6. What did Paul say in his letter to the Philippians about the guard? 7. What four Epistles were written by Paul while at Rome? 8. When were "The Pastoral Epistles" written, and which are they? (*Guide*, p. 30.) 9. When did Luke probably write the book of Acts? (*Guide*, p. 24.) 10. Who were some of Paul's companions during his imprisonment at Rome? (Col. 1.7; 4.10, 14; Phil. 1.1; 4.18; Eph. 6.21; Philem. 1.) 11. How did Paul meet his death, according to tradition? (*Guide*, p. 435.) 12. One of Christ's teachings begins, "Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words": what is the rest of the sentence?

Questions to Think About. 1. To what does "after three months" refer? 2. What is the meaning of "testifying the kingdom of God"? 3. Do great men need sympathy and encouragement? 4. What did Paul accomplish while in Rome? 5. How could he say that his imprisonment there had fallen out unto the progress of the gospel? 6. Why does Paul say he is not ashamed of the gospel, instead of saying that he is proud of it? (*Guide*, p. 437.) 7. Does the close of the Acts seem satisfactory to you? 8. What was Luke's purpose in writing it? 9. In what way can Acts be said to have a logical ending? 10. What is your estimate of the man Paul?

Memory and Note-Book Work. Commit to memory Dr. Van Dyke's stanza, p. 437. In your Note-Book about the Epistles of Paul turn back to your account of Romans and write about the character and contents of the letter. See p. 38 of our Introduction. In your Book about "Lessons from Paul's Words", write what he said to the Romans about Abstinence for the Sake of Others.

FROM MELITA TO ROME

Golden Text

I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. Romans 1.16

LESSON Acts 28.11-31: verses 11-24, 30, 31 printed MEMORIZE verses 30, 31

11 And after three months we set sail in a ship of Alexandria which had wintered in the island, whose sign was The Twin Brothers. 12 And touching at Syracuse, we tarried there three days. 13 And from thence we made a circuit, and arrived at Rhegium: and after one day a south wind sprang up, and on the second day we came to Puteoli 14 where we found brethren, and were entreated to tarry with them seven days: and so we came to Rome. 15 And from thence the brethren, when they heard of us, came to meet us as far as The Market of Appius and The Three Taverns; whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage.

16 And when we entered into Rome, Paul was suffered to abide by himself with the soldier that guarded him.

17 And it came to pass, that after three days he called together those that were the chief of the Jews: and when they were come together, he said unto them, I, brethren, though I had done nothing against the people, or the customs of our fathers, yet was delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans: 18 who, when they had examined me, desired to set me at liberty, because there was no cause of death in me. 19 But when the Jews spake against it, I was constrained to appeal unto Cæsar; not that I had aught whereof to accuse my nation. 20 For this cause therefore did I entreat you to see and to speak with *me:* for because of the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain. 21 And they said unto him, We neither received letters from Judæa concerning thee, nor did any of the brethren come hither and report or speak any harm of thee. 22 But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, it is known to us that everywhere it is spoken against.

23 And when they had appointed him a day, they came to him into his lodging in great number; to whom he expounded *the matter,* testifying the kingdom of God, and persuading them concerning Jesus, both from the law of Moses and from the prophets, from morning till evening. 24 And some believed the things which were spoken, and some disbelieved.

30 And he abode two whole years in his own hired dwelling, and received all that went in unto him, 31 preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all boldness, none forbidding him.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

I. From Malta to Rome, 11-16.
II. Meeting of Paul and the Chief Jews, 17-22.
III. Paul Preaching and Teaching in Rome, 23, 24, 30, 31.

11. *After three months.* As soon as navigation began again, possibly as early as February. Review the lesson of two weeks ago.—*The Twin Brothers.* The Dioscuri (Greek), whose names, Castor and Pollux, are given in the AV.

13. *We made a circuit.* The Greek verb is variously translated: *fetched a compass,* AV; *cast loose,* RVm; *tacked to and fro* is another rendering.

14. *Where we found brethren.* In the Satires of Juvenal we read that at Puteoli "the Syrian Orontes first disgorged its crowds on the way to the Roman Tiber"; this being the usual landing place for travelers from Syria, a Christian community would naturally have been early established here.—*And so we came to Rome.* With good courage and in a spirit of thankfulness because of the week's rest with the brethren at Puteoli.

15. *From thence.* From Rome.—*As far as the Market of Appius and The Three Taverns.* They came in two companies, the first going to the Market of Appius, ten miles farther away from Rome than The Three Taverns. Horace speaks of Appii Forum (the Market of Appius) as "full of inns."

16. *When we entered into Rome.* Some ancient authorities insert (as in the AV) *the centurion delivered the prisoners to the Chief of the camp, but,* RVm. This clause is omitted here because it is not found in the oldest manuscripts. See Light from Oriental Life.—*With the soldier that guarded him.* To whom he was probably chained, verse 20. Soldiers relieved one another in this duty, and thus Paul became known throughout the Prætorian Guard, Phil. 1.12, 13. "Paul never described himself as a prisoner of Rome, but always as the prisoner of Jesus Christ. The chain which Rome imposes is transformed into the golden bracelet of a great love token" (*Morgan*).

17. *When they were come.* They were, no doubt, eager to see Paul.

18. *Desired to set me at liberty.* Recall Acts 23.29; 24.23; 25.25; 26.32.

19. *I was constrained to appeal unto Cæsar.* Recall Acts 25.9-12.

20. *Because of the hope of Israel.* Because of the Messianic hope, the Christ: see Acts 26.6.

22. *This sect.* They speak of the sect of the Nazarenes (Acts 24.5) as they would of the sect of the Sadducees. "Why were the Roman Jews so reserved and conciliatory? The commonly received answer is, that they lived in Rome in a state of great insecurity. They had but recently been allowed to return from banishment. Some think that the decree of banishment had been occasioned by tumults caused by the unbelieving Jews attacking their Christian fellow-countrymen. They saw Paul respected by imperial officers; they felt themselves obliged to be very careful to avoid all show of disturbance" (*Lindsay*).

23. *Testifying the kingdom of God.* Proclaiming its spiritual nature, for the common Jewish belief was in a temporal kingdom.—*Persuading them concerning Jesus, both from the law of Moses and from the prophets.* Compare "Thus it is written that the Christ should suffer", Lk. 24.46.

24. *Some believed and some disbelieved.* As at Antioch in Pisidia and at Corinth and at Ephesus and elsewhere.

30, 31. This is all that Luke tells us about Paul's two years in Rome. They may have been uneventful years, as far as Luke the historian saw them. It is thought that during these years Luke wrote his history.

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

11. *Whose sign was The Twin Brothers.* Painted or carved on the prow of ancient ships was an image of a god, or some emblem of a deity, such as the shield of Minerva, or any image of a man or an animal. This image was the ship's sign which gave the ship her name. According to mythology, Castor and Pollux were the Twin Brothers, the sons of Jupiter and Leda, and were regarded as the tutelar gods of sailors. They were sometimes represented merely by two stars, hovering over a ship, but usually as two young men on horseback, wearing conical caps and having stars above them, as in the accompanying coin from Rhegium.

Vessels with Eyes, Represented on a Wall Painting at Herculaneum

14, 16. *We came to Rome; we entered into Rome.* The double expression of arrival at Rome in verses 14 and 16 is remarkable, but it seems due to the double sense that every name of a city-state bears in Greek; the word *Rome* might either include the entire territory of the city, the whole *ager Romanus,* or be restricted to the walls and buildings. Thus verse 14, "We reached the state Rome", the bounds of which were probably pointed out as the party reached them; in 15, "We passed through two points in the *ager Romanus*", and in 16, "We entered the (walls of) Rome". *W. M. Ramsay,* in *St. Paul the Traveller.*

30. *Two whole years.* Josephus says of Tiberius that he kept Herod Agrippa

I long in bonds, "according to his usual custom, being a delayer of affairs". A later law provided that a prisoner should be freed if the prosecutor failed to appear against him within a year.

COIN OF RHEGIUM
Left: Heads of Castor and Pollux
Right: The Dioscuri Mounted

30, 31. *In his own hired dwelling preaching the kingdom of God.* The Christian practice of meeting in private houses continued until the close of the second century. An elevated seat for the teacher and a table for the Lord's Supper were provided in the regular places of meeting. In "The Church in the Early Centuries", Professor T. M. Lindsay says: "The ground plan of the earliest Roman church, discovered in 1900 in the Forum at Rome, is modeled, not on the basilica or public hall, but on the audience hall of the wealthy Roman burgher, and the recollections of the familiar surroundings at the meetings in the house-churches probably guided the pencil of the architect who first planned the earliest public buildings dedicated to Christian worship. Old liturgies which enjoin the deacons at the period of the service when the Lord's Supper is about to be celebrated to commend the mothers to take their babies on their knees, bring with them memories of these homey gatherings in private homes."

In the time of Diocletian (284-305) churches had been erected in the chief cities, and by the fourth century there were forty Christian churches in Rome.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. In the trials of Paul at Jerusalem and Cæsarea, who had desired to set Paul at liberty? How was Paul constrained to appeal unto Cæsar? In what cities where Paul preached are we told that some believed and some did not? Recall Paul's journey from Cæsarea to Malta. What Christians from Rome had Paul met at Corinth?

The Close of the Acts. Our lesson text follows immediately that of two weeks ago, and ends with the last words of the book of Acts. Does the book end, or does it merely stop? What was Luke's purpose in his writing? Has he accomplished it? See p. 24 of our Introduction.

Paul's Life in Rome. We know that during those two years in Rome "the care of the churches" weighed heavily upon Paul, and from the four Epistles probably written at this time—Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon, and Philippians —we know that he was blessed with the companionship of friends. Timothy and three others, Aristarchus, Jesus Justus, and Mark, who has been forgiven his defection at Antioch (15.39), were "a comfort" to him: Demas, a "fellow-worker", and Luke, "the beloved physician", were with him; Tychicus, whom he used as a messenger, Epaphras, who brought home news from Colossæ, Epaphroditus, who brought him a contribution from Philippi, and Onesimus, the runaway Christian slave of Colossæ, were among his visitors.

Paul's Fate. From Philemon 22, we know that Paul was expecting a speedy release, and it is generally believed that his expectation was realized. Professor Ramsay believes that Paul was detained at Rome to await the coming of his persecutors to testify against him. The trial could not begin until there was an accuser to state the ground of complaint. The Palestinian Jews failed to come, for they knew their case was too weak to be put forward in a Roman Court. Two successive Roman governors of Palestine had said Paul was guiltless. Their non-appearance kept Paul imprisoned the "two years". The law presumed the accused innocent after eighteen months. (This was later the law, and Professor Ramsay argues plausibly that it was a law enacted some years before Paul's time by the Emperor Claudius.) The space of two years is equivalent to the legal term of eighteen months, together with additional time required for the formalities of release. There was, therefore, no proper "first trial," but only an acquittal in default.

Tradition says that after his release Paul visited Spain. From 1 Timothy and Titus (believed to have been written later than the first imprisonment), we learn that he went to Greece, Crete, Ephesus, and Macedonia, passing through

Troas, and that he intended spending the winter at Nicopolis in Epirus. In July, 64, the greater part of Rome was burned over, and Nero, to avert suspicion from himself, accused the Christians of having set the fire. Multitudes of Christians were put to death after horrible tortures, many of them being burnt as torches in the emperor's garden on the Vatican hill.

By the middle of June A. D. 68, Nero had died in disgrace, and tradition says that before then Paul met his fate. Even tradition supplies only a few details, to the effect that he was beheaded on the Ostian Road, three miles from the city, and a matron named Lucina, who lived beside this road, buried his body on her own land.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

From Malta, where we left Paul two weeks ago, it was a day's sail to Syracuse on the eastern coast of Sicily. Crossing from Sicily to Italy through the southern entrance of the Straits of Messina, Paul's ship touched at Rhegium, and then followed the coast northward as far as Puteoli, at the northern extremity of the Bay of Naples. Puteoli has been aptly called "The Liverpool of Rome," for it was the usual harbor for ships from the East carrying passengers or freight for the imperial city. The rest of the journey was by land.

Coin of Syracuse

Twelve miles from Puteoli Paul and his company reached Capua, and the celebrated Appian Way, broad and finely paved, over which for five hundred years victorious generals and armies had marched. Forty-three miles from Rome they came to the Market of Appius, and ten miles from the capital to another station called The Three Taverns.

Rome, the capital of the empire, is on the Tiber about fifteen miles from its mouth. Its population at this time was 1,600,000. Although the Coliseum and other reminders today of Rome's ancient greatness did not then exist, the city was, nevertheless, the chief city of the world in wealth and splendor.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON.

Once Paul had been a Pharisee and the chief of sinners: now he is a bondservant of Jesus Christ, and eager to proclaim the fact. This is what he meant when he wrote to the Romans the words of our Golden Text. Are you imitators of Paul in this, that you speak of your own Christian experiences in your teaching? No other words could have greater weight with your class. Your Christian faith and your Christian hopes—your grand confidence in the power of the gospel—your belief in the message which you bring to your pupils week after week—do they realize it all?

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Boys and girls in Rome in the time of Paul used to hear wonderful stories about two gods, the Twin Brothers named Castor and Pollux. They were gods of the sea, and when sailors feared a coming storm they prayed to these gods. They claimed to see glowing lights at the masthead of their ship which were stars shining in the helmets of the gods who had come to protect them. Lightning could not strike a ship that was under the protection of the Twin Brothers, they said. There was a ship which had on its prow a representation of these two brothers. It had started from Alexandria. Where is Alexandria? Where had the ship wintered when Paul set sail in her?

For Older Pupils. On the summit of a column one hundred and twenty feet high erected by Marcus Aurelius in a piazza near the center of Rome, a statue of Paul the Apostle has been placed. This is his memorial in the city of

Rome. There are magnificent churches dedicated to St. Peter and St. Mark and several other saints, but there is no one of note dedicated to St. Paul. Near the Ghetto, or Jews' quarter, a building is shown to tourists as the traditional "hired house" where Paul lived (and the Church of St. Maria is also said to be the site of that house), while beneath a church near the Forum is the Mamertime Prison, the reputed place of Paul's second imprisonment for nine months, together with Peter. Peter is honored, though some scholars doubt whether he was ever in Rome, but Paul is not, for his teachings are opposed to the dogmas of the papacy.

Outside the walls of Rome, a mile and a half away, over the spot where Paul was supposed to be buried, a church was erected during the reign of Constantine the Great in the fourth century. It has been many times restored. The present magnificent marble cathedral of "St. Paul's without the Walls" was erected in 1854. Another church on the Ostian Road marks the supposed place of his martyrdom. These are the present memorials of the great apostle in Rome.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Sympathy for the Strong

Paul's Need. As we have studied the life and words of Paul we have seen his wonderful courage, his marvelous power of endurance, his indomitable will, his great strength of character. He stands before our minds as one of the greatest moral heroes that ever lived. Can such a man be in any way dependent on others for encouragement and cheer?

"There are hermit souls that live withdrawn
In the place of their self-content;
There are souls like stars, that dwell apart
In a fellowless firmament"—

but among them we can not place this great apostle Paul. He had a genius for friendship, and a genius for expressing it; his letters are filled with affectionate words to his friends and about his friends. He is never happy when he is "fellowless"; Luke, Barnabas, Silas, Timothy, Titus, Apollos, Aquila and Priscilla, and many others we know because they were Paul's dearly beloved companions. We have studied his beautiful words about love in the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians. "If I love you more abundantly, am I loved the less?" he asks the Corinthians in his second letter to them. That this great man, who is so strong intellectually and morally and spiritually, feels the need of human love and sympathy and is not ashamed to let this need be seen, is often indicated, but nowhere more clearly than in our lesson text for today. When the Christians from Rome come a distance of forty-three and thirty-three miles to meet him, he thanks God and takes courage. Those were the brethren whom he had "longed to see", and now he is assured that they have longed to see him, and he is encouraged and eager to begin his labor of love among them.

A Strong Man Helped. In the winter of 1864, an old Quaker lady visited Lincoln at the White House, and took the long-suffering giant's down-stretched hand. She had to rise on tiptoe, and as she did it her sweet voice uttered some words difficult to catch. It is not possible to give the words of either exactly, but this is their purport:

"Yes, friend Abraham, thee need not think thee stands alone. We are all praying for thee. The hearts of all the people are behind thee, and thee can not fail. The Lord has appointed thee, the Lord will sustain thee, and the people love thee. Yea, as no man was ever loved before, does this people love thee. Take comfort, friend Abraham. God is with thee. The people are behind thee."

The effect of the words was easy to see. As when the lights suddenly blaze behind a cathedral window, so the radiance illumined those rugged features and poured from the wonderful eyes. The gaunt form straightened. The mouth became beautiful in its sweetness, as it said to her: "You have given a cup of cold water to a very thirsty and grateful man. You have done me a great kindness". *The Youth's Companion.*

O Who will Walk a Mile with Me?

O who will walk a mile with me
Along life's weary way?
A friend whose heart has eyes to see
The stars shine out o'er the darkening lea,
And the quiet rest at the end o' the day,—
A friend who knows, and dares to say,
The brave, sweet words that cheer the way
Where he walks a mile with me. *Henry van Dyke.*

II The Things have Fallen Out unto the Progress of the Gospel

What Paul Accomplished during his Imprisonment. Paul had long hoped and prayed that he might preach the gospel in Rome, but the way had not opened for him; at last, after a long imprisonment at Cæsarea, and a long and perilous sea journey, he reached Rome a prisoner. This was not the way he had himself planned to come, but it proved a far better way for his great object of making known the gospel. Had he come to Rome a free man he never could have reached the Roman legions and Cæsar's household (Phil. 4.22) as he did through the soldiers to whom he was chained, one after another. In Philippians 1.12, 13, he recognizes this fact: "Now I would have you know, brethren", he writes, "that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the progress of the gospel; so that my bonds became manifest in Christ throughout the whole prætorian guard, and to all the rest". Then the example of his missionary activity from his place of confinement was a greater spur to the Christians in Rome than it could have been had he been free. His abode must have been their headquarters, and he further writes the Philippians that "Most of the brethren in the Lord, being confident through my bonds, are more abundantly bold to speak the word of God without fear". And how much more he accomplished for all people in all lands and ages through the letters he had opportunity to write than he could have done by personal ministry! Epaphras, the minister at the Church of Colossæ in Phrygia, came to see Paul in his imprisonment and tell him about the false teachers who were disturbing that church, and Paul wrote them a letter (Epistle to the Colossians) warning them against dangerous doctrines and urging them to regulate their conduct by Christian principles. At another time Epaphroditus came with loving greetings and a gift from the church at Philippi, and Paul wrote them a tender and grateful letter, his "Love-Letter to the Philippians". To the Ephesians he wrote "his sublimest letter", and to his friend Philemon at Colossæ his beautiful little letter asking pardon for the bearer, Onesimus, the slave who had stolen and run away from his master and had been convicted of sin by Paul's teachings. "Being such a one as Paul the aged and now a prisoner also of Christ Jesus", he writes his friend, "I beseech thee for my child, whom I have begotten in my bonds, Onesimus, who once was unprofitable to thee, but now is profitable to thee and me". Profitable to thee and to me are these letters written by this prisoner of Jesus Christ, and profitable to him also, whose only desire was to know Christ and him crucified. To them that love God all things work together for good.

What John and Bunyan and Luther Accomplished in Prison for the Furtherance of the Gospel. From his place of exile, on the isle of Patmos, John wrote the book of Revelation. In Bedford, England, is kept the jail door which for twelve years was locked on John Bunyan. Dr. Wayland Hoyt refers to the prayers which Bunyan must have pleaded for its opening and exclaims: "But how fruitful were those years! Dreams were going on behind that door, and the world needed them. When 'The Pilgrim's Progress' of which Bunyan dreamed had taken shape and tangibility, Bunyan's Lord, who had forgotten him while the slow years passed, swung the jail door wide." While the Wartburg Castle was for him a hiding-place, Luther translated the New Testament into the German language.

III I am not Ashamed of the Gospel

Why Does Paul use a Negative instead of a Positive Expression? Why should he be content with asserting the mere absence of a sense of disgrace,

when he might have been expected to exult in a sense of triumphant glory? Is not the reason clear? Is it not plain that Paul deprecates any feeling of shame concerning Christianity because he has a distinct remembrance of the time when Christianity did present itself to his mind as a thing to be ashamed of? He remembers that the Gospel of Christ originally came before him in a garb of extreme humility, and in an attitude which excited his contempt as a son of Israel—an attitude which impelled him to say, "I would be ashamed to belong to such a company". And if we ask what awakened this sense of contempt, the answer is found in this very passage. When Paul says "I am not ashamed of the Gospel because it is power", he means to imply that he was at one time ashamed of it from believing it to be weakness. His objection to recognizing Jesus as the Messiah originated in the fact that the cross of Jesus was contrary to the current ideal of greatness. *Dr. George Matheson,* in *Spiritual Development of St. Paul.*

The Contrast between Then and Now. It is an easy thing now to be proud of the Gospel of Christ, for we stand in the presence of its accomplished facts, and we see it recognised as the greatest and the ever-increasing force in the world. No, it requires no boldness and proves no merit to glory in that which all men speak well of; to swell the triumphal procession of an acknowledged victor. If St. Paul could have thrown himself in imagination into the place where we stand to-day, and been able to look back, as we do, upon nineteen centuries of Christian labor and advance, there would have been nothing very wonderful in this saying, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel". But at that time all that we are witnesses of had yet to be proved. The Gospel then had won only a few scattered adherents, chiefly among the poor and uncultured. It had no church buildings, no organised ministry, no standing in respectable society. No school of thinkers and writers had recognised it; no government or magistrates or civil power had noticed it, except to curse it as a disturbing pest; no poetry, art, genius, or literature had been brought into its service; no eloquence had extolled it; no wealth had been laid in tribute at its feet. It had been rejected by all rulers, priests, and dignified personages.

Think of all that, and then the weight of these words of St. Paul impresses you. It was wonderful, indeed, that he could speak with such absolute confidence about this Gospel, calling it the great power of God, anticipating the time when the despised name of Jesus would be incomparably mightier than Cæsar's, and when the truths which had their centre in the cross would have prevailed over all the magnificent pride and intellectual glory of that ancient world. Yes, it required a great prophetic vision to speak these words then: "I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth."

Now the triumphs of the Gospel confront us everywhere. In every great city the masterpieces of architecture are those which Christian art has raised. Wherever we travel, unless it be in heathen lands, the most attractive buildings are those around which cluster long Christian memories, and which owe their existence to Christian devotion. In every famous picture-gallery the paintings which charm us most, and speak to us with the inspiration of genius, are those which show us apostles, saints, and heroes of the long Christian warfare. When we read the records of the past, every page that is best worth reading, which we read over and over again, tells us of some of the doings of men who owed all their courage, goodness, and grandeur to the faith of Jesus, and learnt all their self-forgetting virtues and service at the foot of his cross.

And everywhere the works of the Gospel are in evidence. You see them in Sunday-school, ragged school, refuges, homes for the fallen, orphanages, hospitals, and institutions countless, which lay his healing hand upon the ignorant, diseased, and miserable and preach a message of recovery and hope to the most abject and desperate. You see and hear of hundreds of thousands of homes and private lives into which this Gospel brings patience, strength, courage, and gladness. You cannot count or estimate how many hearts are nerved by it to endure the disappointments of life, the rebuffs of fortune, the stings of the world's malice and neglect, the weariness of sickness, and the blows of bereavement; how many are made brave to struggle on through all the fierce and ungenerous competitions and keep their heads lifted above the deep waters, and face death when it comes with a cheerful smile, because they have him with

them who saved the sinking Peter in the days of old, and took the sting from death by bearing it himself. *J. G. Greenhough,* Condensed from *The Mind of Christ in St. Paul,* by *J. G. Greenhough.*

Are We Proud of Our Discipleship? "I know not the Man," cried Peter with an oath, yet Peter loved his Master. And whatsoever the motive was that prompted his denial, it has been in the world ever since. Seldom openly, but oh! so often tacitly, by silence, by implied consent, by things they do not say or do, Christians who love their Master join with Peter in declaring that they do not know the Son of Man. In polite society the name of Lincoln or of Luther is pronounced with far more readiness than the Name which is above all others, and if exceeding reverence were the motive of the reticence it would be well; but it is not always reverence—more often it is shame. When Christians appeal to the New Testament they often do it with a smile, and an air half apologetic, as of bringing something irrelevant into the discussion. The Constitution of the United States is quoted with finality, and the Sermon on the Mount, the Constitution of the Kingdom of God, is quoted with a smile. Men are profuse in their expressions of reverence for national leaders, and slow to crown with public homage the Desire of all nations, the Hope of the world. How is it in our case? We pride ourselves upon our great acquaintances, but do we glory as Paul did in the cross of Christ? Pride and loyalty and honor align us publicly upon the side of those we love: we are proud as husbands, fathers, kinsmen, scholars: are we proud of our discipleship to Christ? "Ashamed of me and of my words." There is nothing in the world worth taking out of it except its loyalties: the sacred personal relationships in which the spirit elects and cherishes its friends. "I go to prepare a place for you," said Jesus, "that where I am, there ye may be also, and whither I go ye know, and the way ye know". Yes, we know the way, and it is the way of faithful affection, of constant and unfailing loyalty. *The Churchman.*

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

After only three days' rest, Paul called together the chief of the Jews. The most difficult task before him, one that he naturally would most dread, was the conference with those Jewish authorities, and this was the first business to which he attended. Hanging over a business man's desk is the counsel, "Tackle the dread"—good counsel for every one. Let us follow it as Paul always did.

If we can not be Pauls, we can be among those who give cheer and encouragement to others. Let us become encouragers.

Our Prayer. Gracious Father, as we think about Paul's course so nobly run, his life held not dear unto himself, his one aim to know and to make known to others the Christ, how we long to be imitators of him, to follow the Master whom he followed, thy fellow-workman of whom thou needest not to be ashamed! Make us as true to our belief, as ready to speak the right word at the right time for our Lord and King. In his name we ask it.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. In Rome at last. See Robertson's "Epochs in the Life of Paul", Chapters XI and XII.
2. The New Acts of the Apostles is now being written.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. How does the last part of Romans, beginning with the twelfth chapter, differ from the earlier part? (*Guide,* p. 441.) 2. Read 1 Cor. 12.12-27; Eph. 4.15, 16; what words of our text do they amplify?

Questions to Think About. 1. Recall Christ's parable of the Vine and its Branches and compare it with Paul's figure of speech in verses 4 and 5. 2. What is meant by the exhortation to "present your bodies a living sacrififfice"? (*Guide,* p. 440.) 3. What is meant by "be not fashioned according to this world"? (*Guide,* p. 440.) 4. Do most people think more highly of themselves than they ought to think? 5. What is the difference between self-respect and self-conceit? 6. What is meant by thinking soberly of one's self? (*Guide,* p. 446.) 7. Has every one some gift that may be used in Christian service?

Memory and Note-Book Work. Memorize Rom. 12.1-8. Write Chapter XXII, Paul at Rome.

A LIVING SACRIFICE

Golden Text

Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service. Romans 12.1

LESSON Romans 12: verses 1-8 printed MEMORIZE verses 6-8

1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your spiritual service. 2 And be not fashioned according to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

3 For I say, through the grace that was given me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but so to think as to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to each man a measure of faith. 4 For even as we have many members in one body, and all the members have not the same office: 5 so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and severally members one of another. 6 And having gifts differing according to the grace that was given to us, whether prophecy, *let us prophesy* according to the proportion of our faith; 7 or ministry, *let us give ourselves* to our ministry; or he that teacheth, to his teaching; 8 or he that exhorteth, to his exhorting: he that giveth *let him do it* with liberality; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

I. Consecrated Selves, 1, 2.
II. Consecrated Gifts, 3-8.
III. Consecrated Love, 9-21.

1. *I beseech you. Beseech* is a favorite word of Paul's.—*By the mercies of God.* They are the motive for the personal consecration which Paul urges, and the chief of all God's mercies is that he loved us and gave his Son, himself, for us. "If there is nothing in you that will respond to God's appeal when you think of his mercies, I don't think much of you. We are being entreated, not threatened. We have here a call for volunteers, not an order for a draft. The armies of God are never made up of drafted men and women, ordered into service whether willing or not. This is not a call to hard duty, but an invitation to the enjoyment of a privilege" (*Billy Sunday*).—*Present your bodies.* Give yourselves, your whole personalities, all that you are.—*A living sacrifice.* The word *sacrifice* comes from the old Latin *sacerfacio,* to make a thing sacred by putting it to death. There is here a striking contrast between the offering of slain and dead animals in the Old Dispensation, and the offering of the whole life with all its affections and energies in the New. Compare Rom. 6.13: Present yourselves unto God, as alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. "How can a body become a sacrifice? Let the eye look on no evil, and it is a sacrifice. Let the tongue utter nothing base, and it is an offering. Let the hand work no sin, and it is a holocaust. But more, this suffices not, but besides we must actively exert ourselves for good; the hand giving alms, the mouth blessing them that curse us, the ear ever at leisure for listening to God" (*Chrysostom,* quoted by *Vincent*).—*Holy.* Set apart. "As in the Jewish rite all ritual requirements must be fulfilled to make the sacrifice acceptable to God, so in the Christian sacrifice our bodies must be holy, without spot or blemish, pure" (*Sanday*).—*Acceptable. Well-pleasing,* RVm.—*Spiritual. Belonging to the reason,* RVm.—*Service. Worship,* RVm.

2. *Be not fashioned according to this world.* Or, *age,* RVm. Paul thinks of the spirit of this world as selfish, aiming at the pleasure of self rather than at

being pleasing to God.—*Be transformed by the renewing of your mind.* Be different from the world, not only in its spirit and pursuits but in your very nature, for as a man thinketh, so is he. "If you want to change your characters, change the deep convictions of your mind; and get hold, as living realities, of the great truths of Christ's Gospel. It is not the much that you say you believe that shapes your character; it is the little that you habitually believe. Truth professed has no transforming power; truth received and fed upon can revolutionize a man's whole character" (*Maclaren*).—*That.* In order that.

3. *For I say, through the grace that was given me.* Paul speaks as an apostle, one who has the right and the wisdom to give them good counsel, but is careful to remind them that these "gifts" of his are Divinely given. In Rom. 1-5 he speaks of himself as "called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, concerning his Son through whom we received grace and apostleship."—*Faith.* "Faith is God's gift, and is of differing power and character, carrying with it differing 'gifts', *i. e.* capacities for Christian service" (*Dummelow*).—*To think soberly.* This sober estimate of self will lead to right service, to the right use of gifts, verses 6-8.

4-5. This is the thought of 1 Cor. 12.12-27 condensed; see also Eph. 4.15, 16; Col. 1.18. The figure forcibly recalls Christ's parable of the Vine and its Branches.—*All the members have not the same office.* No member is independent of the others. The head can not say to the feet, I have no need of you, 1 Cor. 12.21.

6. *Having gifts.* The subject of gifts is now introduced, because herein there was a tendency on the part of the Romans to self-conceit, to over-estimation of self. "To Paul a believing soul without Christ-given graces is a monstrosity. No one is without some graces, and therefore no one is without some duties. The humility which in response to all invitations to work for Christ pleads unfitness is, if true, more tragical than it at first seems, for it is a confession that the man who alleges it has no real hold of the Christ in whom he professes to trust. If a Christian man is fit for no Christian work, it is time that he gravely ask himself whether he has any Christian life. 'Having gifts' is the basis of all the apostle's exhortations. It is to him inconceivable that any Christian should not possess, and be conscious of possessing, some endowment from the life of Christ which makes him fit for, and binds him to, a course of active service" (*Maclaren*).—*Prophecy.* Inspired speaking.—*According to the proportion of our faith.* According to the measure of revelation which the inspired speaker has received.

7-8. *Ministry.* Service.—*Liberality.* Or, *singleness,* RVm.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. How many lessons have we had from Romans? What was the theme of each? Why did Paul write the letter? How has Paul shown by his life that he appreciated the mercies of God? How has he shown his eagerness to do the will of God? How did he teach the lesson of lowliness of mind?

The Relation of Romans Twelfth to what Precedes. We naturally divide the book of Romans into two main parts, and say that the first part is doctrinal and the second part practical, but the very first sentence of the twelfth chapter, where we make the division, shows that the latter bears an intimate relation to the former. I beseech you *therefore,* says Paul. The force of that therefore I give in Dr. Jowett's words. "It is at the gravest peril that we dissociate theology and ethics, and separate the thought of duty to men from the thought of relation to God. When the Apostle Paul, in the twelfth chapter of Romans, begins to be hortatory, preceptive, practical, it is because he has already prepared the rich bed in which these strong and winsome graces may be grown. Every precept in the twelfth chapter sends its roots right down through all the previous chapters, through the rich, fat soil of sanctification and justification, and the mysterious energies of redeeming grace."

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

"I beseech you," thus Paul begins his exhortation. His letters are in the main persuasive, tender, pleading. Before he became a follower of the gentle

Nazarene he had believed in force, he had haled men and women to prison because their way in religion was not his way. But after he became a Christian, he was as his Teacher. For Christ ever wooed men, appealed to them by loving invitations, drew them to him by cords of love. And intense as was his hatred of sin, even as intense was his love for the sinner. So a teacher will prevail by persuasion, when he would only repel by reproach.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. How does Paul begin his letter to the Romans? Instead of *servant* what word is given in the margin? "Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ," the translation in the margin reads. Let us put these words at the beginning of the twelfth chapter, and we shall have: "I, Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ—a man who belongs to Jesus Christ as a slave belongs to his master, who has no power over his own body (as the Africans explain the word *slave* or *bondservant*), for it belongs to Jesus the Christ—beseech you to present your bodies a living sacrifice—to belong to Jesus Christ as I, Paul, belong to him."

For Older Pupils. Nearly nineteen centuries have passed since Paul planted the gospel in the Empire of Nero. His name today is first after that of Jesus in Christian history. As Dr. A. T. Robertson states it, it is not enough to say that he stood at the source of Christianity and put his impress upon it in the formative period. That is quite true, but a great deal more is true. Real Christianity has never gotten away from Paul. I do not believe that it ever will. He was the great thinker in this important era. He blazed the way in doctrine and in life. He caught the spirit of Jesus and breathed that spirit into Gentile Christianity. Masterful in intellect, mighty in endeavor, high in spirit, rich in heart was Paul, whose winged words today challenge the world's attention and call men "to know the love of Christ that passeth knowledge" and to "be filled unto all the fulness of God." What are some of Paul's great chapters which we have studied this year? The twelfth of Romans is another great chapter.

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Consecrated Lives

Bodies Consecrated to God's Service. The Lord wants my body. He needs its members as ministers of righteousness. He would work in the world through my brain and eyes, and ears, and lips, and hands, and feet.

And the Lord wants my body as *"a living sacrifice"*. He asks for it when it is thoroughly alive! We so often deny the Lord our bodies until they are infirm and sickly, and sometimes we do not offer them to him until they are quite "worn out". It is infinitely better to offer them even then than never to offer them at all. But it is best of all to offer our bodies to our Lord when they are strong, and vigorous, and serviceable, and when they can be used in the strenuous places of the field.

And so let me appoint a daily consecration service, and let me every morning present my body "a living sacrifice" unto God. Let me regard it as a most holy possession, and let me keep it clean. Let me recoil from all abuse of it—from all gluttony, and intemperance, and "riotous living". Let me look upon my body as a church, and let the service of consecration continue all day long. "Know ye not that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit?" *Dr. J. H. Jowett,* in *My Daily Meditation.*

Be not Conformed to this World, but be ye Transformed by the Renewing of your Mind. Be not conformed; be transformed. We are conformed to the world when we just yield passively to our circumstances. "The world is ever with us," this material scheme of things in which we live, which has, however, some mental and moral atmosphere, and the danger is that the fascination of this atmosphere shall lead to a false estimate of its value. "The world" stands for a set of forces which produce what we call worldliness. For one thing, they are horizontal forces, not vertical; they are forces that tell you how to get on—they have nothing to say to you about getting up. They are forces that are material rather than moral. They can speak much more quickly

about riches than they can about righteousness. It is possible to be in the world a long time without God, and not to miss him.

But is it possible for us to resist this pressure of the world? Remember that it is not necessary for any living thing to be conformed to its environment. Have you never seen a bit of ivy that has pushed its way through the brick wall rather than be conformed to its narrow world? Have you not seen a tree that has thrown a brick wall down rather than be kept within the narrow limits that it is planted in? It is in our power to berak out into a larger life, to get into touch with God. The great example is Jesus Christ. He was in this world just as much as you and I are in it, under its influence, exposed to its temptations. But the one thing that Jesus Christ absolutely refused to do was to be conformed to this world. He was the greatest non-conformist that ever lived. He refused the temptations of his enemies, the solicitations of his friends, the suggestions of the devil. He had his own message to speak, and he spoke that. He had his own life to live, and he lived that. He refused to be transformed, and he was transfigured.

You remember the story of the sirens who sang on the island, and sang so enchantingly that sailors passing by the island were lured to it, to their destruction. But Ulysses wanted to hear the singing of the sirens without suffering, so he bound himself to the mast of the ship, and stopped the ears of his sailors with wax; and then, when they sailed by the island, the sailors could hear nothing of the singing; and though Ulysses heard it, he was lashed to the mast, and so could not obey the call. But when the Argonauts sailed by the island, they put no wax into the sailors' ears; they did not bind themselves to the mast, but they took Orpheus with them, who played so divinely, his music was far more beautiful than the singing of the sirens; and so they sailed by in safety because they had the better music on board. If you and I know nothing sweeter than the world, we shall be conformed to it, it is the best we know; but if we have on board our ship the sweetness that is in Jesus Christ, if we know nothing but the good and acceptable and perfect will of God, we shall not want to be conformed to the world, we shall be reaching forth to that which is best. Be not conformed, be transformed. *Condensed* from a *Sermon* by *J. E. Roberts.*

A Peculiar People. We are a people of a great possession. Certain things that belong to Christ are ours, because he is ours. His life is ours. His peace is ours. His joy is ours. We are a people having so great a possession in all things spiritual that our lives certainly ought to be more fruitful.

It is said that in the East dress is still a symbol or sign of one's position. So the Christian has a distinct dress. It is the imputed righteousness of Christ. Have we not come to a time now when, in our living, the demand has been made upon us that we should dress as the world dresses, not in the clothing we wear, but in our habits of thought and our manners of life? And is it not true that too often there is very little difference between us and the world? There are but two ways to live in this world: one is for God, the other is against him; one is in accordance with his will, the other is in utter disregard of what he desires for us. *Condcnsed* from a *Sermon* by *Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman.*

My Reasonable Service (AV). It is only in the light of Calvary that we can interpret the fullest significance to our own hearts of this, his call. It is reasonable that if he purchased me he should have me; it is reasonable that if for me he shed his blood, my life should be yielded to his service who paid the price; it is my "reasonable service" that if I partake of his gifts I should put my life under his government. *J. Stuart Holden.*

Paul's Self-Surrendered Life. I was in Gouverneur, New York, awhile ago, and I went into a telegraph office there and fell into conversation with the operator, and he told me that his call was the letter "G". And he said to me: "I am sometimes busy about the office, and the instrument is ticking off its messages, but I do not seem to hear them because they are not my letter. But the moment they sound 'G' I hear it, and I go and put my finger on the key. And I am sometimes sleeping, and the messages are sent through the darkness as well as the light; but I don't know them. But when the 'G' sounds, even if I am asleep, I hear that, because it is my call; and I go and put my finger on the key to let them know that I am here." That seems to be the attitude of Paul to Jesus Christ. He knows what his call is; and whatever is transpiring in the world,

whenever Jesus calls "Paul!" Paul is ready to answer, and ready to obey whatever the Master may have. *Bishop Luther B. Wilson.*

What God Wants of a Christian. If you would all give to God what rightfully belongs to him, I tell you he would create a commotion on earth and in hell. God has a warfare of his own going on right now. He wants you. Why won't you enlist?

If God had the feet of some of you, he would point your toes in different ways than you have been going for many years. He would make some of you wear out shoe-leather taking back what you have that doesn't belong to you. If God had your feet, he would take you to prayer-meeting. If God had your feet, he'd make you walk a lot straighter in religion and politics.

If God had your hands he would make you let go of a lot of things you hold on to with a death-like grip. Let God have your hands, and he will make them do things that would make the angels wonder and applaud.

"Your body"? That takes the head as well as the hands. God wants brains as well as bones and muscles. God's is the greatest business there is, and he wants the best help he can get. You want to use good business methods in religion.

Bishop Taylor promised God that he would do as much hard thinking and planning for him as he would do for another man for money. He did it. *Condensed* from a *Sermon* by *Billy Sunday.*

The Personal Gift. True religion goes far beyond a philosophical relation to God; it means far more than an ecclesiastical relation to him; it signifies the fellowship of the individual soul with God in consciousness, willingness, trust, and love.

Even in human relationships the official tie is not enough, the personal element is a felt necessity if the relationship is to become a satisfying reality. Not to say anything of the union of husband and wife, of parent and child, of brother and sister, we feel a craving for the personal element in relations far removed from these more intimate ones. The relation of the pastor to his flock must be one of personal knowledge and affection; until it attains to this it is far below the ideal. The true physician while treating his patients must become more than a scientific specialist; the official relationship must acquire something of the character of friendship before it is really satisfying and effective. The family lawyer is one whose legalism has been humanized, and who has succeeded in establishing a mutual trust and regard between himself and his client.

All relationships become real and noble as they are vitalized by personal respect, confidence, and love; falling short of this they are merely artificial and conventional arrangements utterly destitute of poetry and delight. Above all things, our relationship to God must be of this highest order, any other bond to the living one being singularly unreal and inadequate.

We ask ourselves, then, has this personal element the place in our religious life that it ought to have? Or, rather, are we not apt to content ourselves with the existence of natural, churchly, and professional bonds? We must deal with God in our soul. Let us strive for more of that personal element upon which the New Testament so persistently insists, for in truth the New Testament knows nothing except the personal element. Let the bond of our covenant with God not be in the letter of catechism and creed, not in forms of worship, not in sacramental observances, not in membership merely with the visible Church, but in hallowed thought, admiration, awe, love, and obedience. The true religious union is in personal, throbbing, breathing, joyous fellowship of the soul with God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us beware lest our identification with the church be reckoned identification with God. Let our tie to the heavenly be vital and not legal, affectional not official, the union of the flowering, fruitful branch with the vine. *Dr. William L. Watkinson.*

II By the Mercies of God

Thanksgiving Day. This has been Thanksgiving Week. I wonder if our Lesson Committee thought about the fact when they assigned for today Paul's words to the Romans in which he gives "the mercies of God" as a motive for dedicating one's self to his service. A writer in a weekly paper refers to the fact that long centuries before the landing of the Pilgrims, and longer yet be-

fore the presidents and governors began to set apart the day in late November which has developed into an old home festival dear to American hearts, the Apostle Paul was emphasizing over and over the element of thanksgiving as an essential part of the equipment of those who would lead the right kind of life.

The article continues with these helpful thoughts. The thanksgiving which is really worth while, that which makes the individual better and stronger, and which blesses the whole world, is the thanksgiving which becomes a habit. A year of doubt and discontentment cannot be atoned for by one day of gratitude for the bounties of the harvest. The pessimism which prevents peace and progress through three hundred and sixty-four days cannot be offset by the optimism which goes with eating a turkey dinner.

It makes a vast difference in the effectiveness of our work and in what life brings us whether we approach each day in a spirit of appreciation or of depreciation. And we all have so much to be thankful for, if we only stop to realize it! The poor, the sick and the old are more thrilled with gratitude for the numberless blessings of their lot than the rich, the well and the young, whose opportunities and possibilities are so much greater. Here works the law of compensation.

This Thanksgiving day means much to all Americans, but that of 1917 will mean much more to those who make each day in all the coming year a day of gratitude—gratitude expressed and shared—for the things material and spiritual which we too often accept as a matter of course, for the every-day blessings of life in this wonderful age, for the privilege of self-development and of becoming braver and more patient, for the golden opportunities of love and labor, of sacrifice and service.

What Thanksgiving Means to Boys and Girls. There is a maid in my home who speaks English very brokenly. One day she said to me, "Next Tursday will be—what you call it—shicken day". Does Thanksgiving Day mean "Chicken Day" to you? Of course you all had chicken or turkey or something good on Thursday, and that is one thing which the day means to you, but it means something far more, also.

Of course you can tell who it was who first thought of setting aside a special day for thanking God for all his blessings. The Pilgrim Fathers, we call them, those people who came to our country long ago when it was all a wilderness. You recall how terrible was that first winter which they spent here—now nearly three hundred years ago—how great was their suffering, and how more than half of their number died, and yet when March came and the sun shone brightly again the living sang songs of thanksgiving for all God's mercies to them. And when they gathered their harvest in the fall, Governor Bradford sent four men out to hunt and fish that they might have something especially good for their celebration, and the Indian king, Massasoit, came with nineteen other men and five deer. One colony after another kept its own day of thanksgiving, until George Washington as President set apart a day in November for the whole nation to observe as Thanksgiving Day. And every year since then our country has observed its Thanksgiving Day as a special day on which to thank God for his manifold mercies.

You know the verse about "Count your blessings". Let us begin. Our eyes: are they not great blessings? Yesterday I saw a man walking on the street and feeling his way about with a stick, because he had lost both his eyes and could not see, and of course I thought, "How thankful I am that I have two good eyes." Are you not? Then, our minds: we can all learn and think, and how thankful we should be for this. I visited an Insane Asylum once, where the people could not use their minds aright, and it was such a sorrowful sight that their faces haunted me for days. How thankful we should all be that we are not like them! And then our feet. There was a man so poor that he had no shoes, and he was feeling very sorrowful, he could not count his blessings at all, but when he came across a man sitting by the road who had no feet he felt very thankful that he had feet even if he did not have any shoes to put upon them. We never could count up our blessings. Begin by thanking God for something each day, and then you will see how they keep growing in number.

"For the fruit upon the tree
For the birds that sing of thee,

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For the earth in beauty dressed,
Friends and playmates, and the rest;
For thy precious, loving care,
For thy bounty everywhere,
Father, we thank thee; Father, we thank thee;
Father in heaven, we thank thee."

III Self Conceit

Do not Think more highly of Yourself than you ought to Think.

Beware of too sublime a sense
Of your own worth and consequence!
The man who dreams himself so great,
And his importance of such weight—
That all around,—that all that's done,—
Must move and act for him alone,—
Will learn in school of tribulation
The folly of his expectation. *Cowper.*

Think Soberly of Self. To arrive at a just estimate of ourselves the estimate must ever be accompanied with a distinct consciousness that all is God's gift. That will keep us from anything in the nature of pride or over-weening self-importance. It will lead to true humility, which is not ignorance of what we can do, but recognition that we, the doers, are of ourselves but poor creatures. We are less likely to fancy that we are greater than we are when we feel that, whatever we are, God made us so. "What hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now, if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?"

Further, it is to be noted that the estimate of gifts which Paul enjoins is an estimate with a view to service. Much self-investigation is morbid, because it is self-absorbed; and much is morbid because it is undertaken only for the purpose of ascertaining one's "spiritual condition". Such self-examination is good enough in its way, and may sometimes be very necessary; but a testing on one's own capacities for the purpose of ascertaining what we are fit for, and what therefore it is our duty to do, is far more wholesome. Gifts are God's summons to work, and our first response to the summons should be our scrutiny of our gifts with a distinct purpose of using them for the great end for which we received them. It is well to take stock of the loaves that we have, if the result be that we bring our poor provisions to him, and put them in his hands, that he may give them back to us so multiplied as to be more than adequate to the needs of the thousands. Such just estimate of our gifts is to be attained mainly by noting ourselves at work. Patient self-observation may be important, but it is liable to be mistaken; and the true test of what we can do is what we *do* do.

The just estimate of our gifts which Paul enjoins is needful in order that we may ascertain what God has meant us to be and do, and that we may neither waste our strength in trying to be some one else, nor hide our talent in the napkin of ignorance or false humility. There is quite as much harm done to Christian character and Christian service by our failure to recognize what is in our power, as by ambitious or ostentatious attempts at what is above our power. *Dr. Alexander Maclaren,* in *The Epistle to the Romans.*

A Man who Valued himself too Highly. Did you ever hear of Martin F. Tupper, who wrote a book entitled "Proverbal Philosophy"? The book was very popular when it was first issued, and many good stories have been told of the author's consequent self-appreciation. Once on the deck of a steamer he met an acquaintance who was very famous, and greeted him with the remark, "I perceive, sir, that I am not the only distinguished man on board". Soon afterwards he started for the cabin, and on his way handed his umbrella to a young woman, a perfect stranger, and asked her to take care of it for him. "Young lady," he said solemnly, "you will now be able to say, in after life, that you have held the umbrella of Martin Tupper".

An Analogy. Some of you, I am sure, have read Alice in Wonderland, and you remember what happened to Alice when she ate the piece of cake marked "Eat me." She found herself growing taller, taller, until at length everything looked quite small beneath her. Now Pride does for us all what the wonderful

cake did for Alice. He puffs us up: he makes us very high and very great in our own sight. *George Milligan.*

A Comparison. I was on a steamer when a passenger shot a sea-bird that looked like an eagle: but when its feathers were stripped off it looked like a humming-bird that had been caught in the rain. That's a conceited man, all fuss and feathers, and not much else. *E. P. Brown.*

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

As the Israelites could bring no dead or sick beast to the altar of sacrifice—as Curtius sprang into the yawning chasm of the Roman forum living and in full armor—so we must place at the service of God our living bodies, all that we are, the strength and vigor of our lives, with all their mental and spiritual equipment.

We can not transform our minds—our desires and ideals—so that they will wholly accord with God's will, but Christ can do this for us.

Our Prayer. O Lord, help us to see that in yielding to this appeal of the apostle we not only serve thee but ourselves. We bless thee for the economy of thy gospel, which asks much of us, but always gives more. Thou dost offer to transform us, by the renewing of our minds, and give us proof of what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God. For this thou didst create us; for this thou hast been schooling us. Save us from doing much that must be undone. Give us wisdom to take the direct way to spiritual conquest. Help us to give thee all the life, and not plan to present thee only a fragment at the last. Help us to reckon thee as a partner in all our affairs this day. Amen. (*George Skene.*)

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. A living Sacrifice. See the First Topic; and the Power of Sacrifice, "Missionary Review of the World," July, 1914, p. 497.
2. The epigrammatic injunctions of Romans XII.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. When did John's acquaintance with Jesus first begin? (Jn. 1.35-42.) 2. When did his friendship for Jesus stand the test when all others failed their Lord? 3. Where was Patmos? 4. Why was John there? (*Guide,* p. 45.) 5. On what occasions had Jesus while on earth said "Fear not"? 6. What are some of the "I am" sayings of Jesus recorded in John's Gospel? 7. What is the meaning of Alpha and Omega? (*Guide,* p. 449.) 8. Look up the marginal reference in the description of the Glorified Christ.

Questions to Think About. 1. Who was the originator of the revelation? 2. Who was the medium of the revelation? 3. Who was the transmitter of the revelation? 4. Were these the only churches in Asia? 5. Why seven? 6. What is *grace?* 7. Why are seven Spirits spoken of in verse 4? 8. What was the perfect number? 9. What is the significance of each of the three titles given to Jesus in verse 5? 10. What is the meaning of the last clause of verse 5? 11. What is the meaning of the first part of verse 6? (*Guide,* p. 449.) 12. What is the meaning of "in the Spirit"? (*Guide,* p. 450.) 13. What is the meaning of "I have the keys of death and of Hades"? 14. What is the significance of the golden candlesticks? 15. What relation does Christ sustain to God, as indicated in these verses? 16. How many of the Persons of the Trinity are introduced? 17. Where in the lesson do you see Christ's love? 18. His power over sin? 19. His interest in his church? 20. Have you a vision of Christ? 21. What is he to you? 22. Can you hear his voice?

Memory and Note-Book Work. Memorize Rev. 1.5-6. In your Note-Book about the Epistles of Paul finish your account of Romans by writing about the letter as literature and its lessons for today. See p. 39 of our Introduction. In your Book entitled "Lessons from Paul's Words," write what he said about "A Living Sacrifice".

Questions upon the Book of Revelation. See pp. 44-50 of our introduction.) 1. Why is the book called Revelation? 2. Who wrote it? 3. What do we know about him? 4. Why was he in Patmos, and what was probably his suffering?

JESUS CHRIST THE FIRST AND THE LAST

Golden Text

Fear not; I am the first and the last, and the living one; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore. Revelation 1.17, 18

LESSON Revelation 1: verses 1-8, 17-20 printed MEMORIZE verses 4-6

1 The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show unto his servants, *even* the things which must shortly come to pass: and he sent and signified *it* by his angel unto his servant John; 2 who bare witness of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, *even* of all things that he saw. 3 Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of the prophecy, and keep the things that are written therein: for the time is at hand.

4 John to the seven churches that are in Asia: Grace to you and peace, from him who is and who was and who is to come; and from the seven Spirits that are before his throne; 5 and from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loveth us, and loosed us from our sins by his blood; 6 and he made us *to be* a kingdom, *to be* priests unto his God and Father; to him *be* the glory and the dominion for ever and ever. Amen. 7 Behold, he cometh with the clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they that pierced him; and all the tribes of the earth shall mourn over him. Even so, Amen.

8 I am the Alpha and the Omega, saith the Lord God, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.

17 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as one dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying, Fear not; I am the first and the last, 18 and the Living one; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades. 19 Write therefore the things which thou sawest, and the things which are, and the things which shall come to pass hereafter; 20 the mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches; and the seven candlesticks are seven churches.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE.

I. The Introduction, 1-3.
II. The Salutation, 4-8.
III. The Voice, 9-11.
IV. The Vision, 12-16.
V. The Interpreting Voice, 17-20.

1. *The Revelation.* The Greek word Ἀποκαλύψις, Apocalupsis, (whence comes our word *Apocalypse*) means unveiling, revealing, revelation. (Ἀπό, *from* and καλύπτω, *to cover.*) As Luke in writing the Acts wrote history, and Paul in writing to the churches wrote Epistles, so John, in writing this last book of the Bible, wrote an Apocalypse or a Revelation. See p. 45.—*Which God gave him.* Or, *God gave unto him, to show unto his servants the things, etc.* RVm. The Revelation originates in the mind of God—comes through his Son Jesus the Christ, into the mind of the human interpreter and transmitter, John. Compare Jn. 3.35; 7.16; 8.28.—*Even the things which must shortly come to pass.* The events were close at hand at the time of the writing. As time is computed by God, Dr. Vincent suggests.—*His servant John.* John the apostle.

2. *Who bare witness....saw.* Whether this refers to his witnessing in the Fourth Gospel, or to this book of Revelation, can not be settled; the aorist tense in the Greek usually refers to something completed in the past, but it may

be taken as "the epistolary aorist", referring to the witnessing which John is now bearing.

3. *Bessed is he that readeth and they that hear.* The immediate reference is to the one who should read the message aloud in the churches; so Paul expected his letters to be read aloud.—*Words of the prophecy.* This is the only time that the book of Revelation is called a prophecy; we must not forget that *prophecy* means an inspired writing, rather than a prediction. See p. 46.

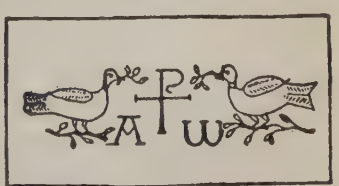
4. *John to the Seven Churches that are in Asia.* The customary form for the beginning of a letter: see the closing benediction, 22.21. John was personally acquainted with these seven churches: see p. 45. By Asia is meant, as our earlier lessons have shown, not the continent of Asia nor the peninsula of Asia Minor, but the Roman province by that name. The whole Revelation was written primarily for these churches: see Rev. 22.16. Seven is a number representing completeness, and therefore means all.—*From him who is and who was and who is to come.* Or, *who cometh,* RVm. From theEternal God. There is evidently a direct allusion here to Ex. 3.14, where Jehovah reveals himself as the great "I AM", the self-existent, and Eternal One.—*The seven Spirits that are before the throne.* Again the number seven: the Holy Spirit in his complete working. Compare Rev. 4.5; 5.6.

5. *The faithful witness.* Compare verse 2, and Rev. 3.14; and Jesus' words, "I bear witness to the truth", Jn. 18.37.—*The first-born of the dead.* The first of the dead to "enter life". Compare Col. 1.18.—*The ruler of the kings of the earth.* A paraphrase of the language of the eighty-ninth Psalm.—*Unto him that loveth us.* "Perhaps John first wrote 'loved' and then bethought him, 'Why should I say "loved" when he loves us still'?" We love him because he first loved us.—*Loosed us from our sins by his blood.* Greek, *in his blood,* RVm. "Blood" stands for sacrificial death. "Along with this indubitable experience of forgiveness of, and deliverance from, sin, we must take the universal conviction of the time, expressed by certain of the Pharisees in our Lord's life time: 'Who can forgive save God only?' in order to see the full bearing of the fact that these Christians of the first generation knew, felt and declared that it was through Jesus that this had happened to them." (*Scott.*)

6. *He made us to be a kingdom.* A society under his kingship. "He 'loosed', and then he ennobled. After emancipation there came enfranchisement" (*Jowett*).—*To be priests unto his God and Father.* See Ex. 19.6. In former times other men had been priests, or mediators, between God and men; now such are no longer needed, for each one has direct access to God. "A priest is one who has a well-trodden way to God, and who treads it in the interest of his brother" (*Jowett*).—*To be the glory and the dominion for ever and ever.* Or, *unto the ages of the ages,* RVm. Compare Rom. 16.27; 2 Tim. 4.18; Heb. 13.21; 1 Pet. 4.11.

7. *Behold he cometh with the clouds at the judgment.* Compare Dan. 7.13—"Behold, there came with the clouds of heaven one like unto a son of man;" also Mt. 24.30; 26.64; Mk. 14.62.—*Every eye shall see him, and they that pierced him:* compare Zech. 12.10.—They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son—and the reference to this verse in Jn. 19.37. "There will be two kinds of mourning, the one due to the terror of an enemy, the other to the terror of the penitent" (*Bengel*).

8. *The Alpha and the Omega.* Revelation was written in Greek, and the first letter of the Greek alphabet, Alpha, A, and the last letter Ω, Omega, long O, are used (as we would use A and Z) to signify the beginning and the end, the first and the last, the Eternal One. Compare Rev. 21.6; Isa. 44.6. Our word *alphabet* is a combination of the first two Greek letters, Alpha and Beta.—*Who.* Or, *he who,* RVm.—The Almighty. The Supreme Ruler.



A Design from the Catacombs with the Letters Alpha and Omega

9. *Partaker with you in the tribulation.* John was at the time of his vision an exile on the isle of Patmos, set, no doubt, to hard labor in the mines or the quarries (see p. 451), and was a partaker with them in persecution.—*Patience.*

Endurance.—*For the word of God.* Proclaiming the word of God was the cause of his exile.

10. *In the Spirit.* He was meditating upon Christ and Divine things: his mind was open and receptive for Divine messages.—*On the Lord's Day.* This was the first day of the week, called "the Lord's Day" in memory of Christ's resurrection. "He was 'in the Spirit', the life of sense suspended, heaven opened before the eye of faith." "Woe to the professed Christian, and especially to the preacher, who hears no voices and sees no visions. We thus hear and see when we are in the spirit."—*I heard behind me a great voice, as of a tempest, saying.* Compare Ezek. 3.12: Then the spirit lifted me up, and I heard behind me the voice of a great rushing, saying.

11. *The seven churches.* The number seven is the perfect number: the seven churches symbolize the entire church.

12. *Seven golden candlesticks.* Greek, *lampstands,* RVm. The seven-branched candlesticks in the Tabernacle (Ex. 25.31) suggested the figure.

13. *Clothed with a garment down to the foot.* Such was the robe of the priest.—*A golden girdle.* Compare Dan. 10.5.

14. *His beard and his hair were white as white wool, white as snow.* Compare Dan. 7.9: the Ancient of Days did sit, whose raiment was white as snow, and the hairs of his head like pure wool.—*His eyes were as a flame of fire.* Compare Dan. 7.9; 10.6.

15. *His feet like unto burnished brass.* Compare Ezek. 1.7; Dan. 10.6.—*His voice as the voice of many waters.* Compare Ezek. 1.24; 43.2.

16. *Seven Stars.* See verse 20 and Rev. 2.1; 3.1.—*Out of his mouth proceeded a sharp two-edged sword.* Compare Heb. 4.12.—*His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.* Compare the record of the Transfiguration, when "his face did shine as the sun", Mt. 17.2.

17. *I fell at his feet as one dead.* Compare the effect of their visions upon Daniel and Ezekiel, Dan. 8.17; 10.9; Ezek. 1.28.—*Fear not.* Compare Jesus' words in Mt. 17.6, 7.—*I am the first and the last.* The same words which in the eighth verse are applied to God.

18. *The living one.* Compare Jn. 1.1, 4.—*Was dead.* Greek, *became dead,* RVm.—*I have the keys of death and of Hades.* Compare Mt. 16.19; Jn. 5.28. By *Hades* is understood the world of the dead. "No distinction is to be drawn between these two words: they both combine in one idea the underworld of the dead." The meaning is that Christ has in his control the time and the manner of each one's death.

19. *The things which thou sawest.* In the vision, told about in verses 9-20.—*The things which are.* The situation in the churches, told about in the next chapter.—*The things which shall come to pass hereafter.* "John records in this book the vision or visions he had seen in Patmos, but he does more. The visions set his prophetic activity in motion. It was probably after he had left the isle of his banishment that he committed to writing what had been given him to see. And as he weaves his record of that, he weaves in other things, the fruit of meditation on his strange experience, fragments and echoes of Old Testament prophecy and Apocalypse, and, it may be, fragments of other apocalypses which were precious in his sight. It is impossible, and it is not necessary, to distinguish what he had actually seen from the thoughts and memories and predictions which he thus wrought into the record of his visions. He was at once the describer of his vision and its interpreter, delineator of the world as seen by the eye of God, and prophet of the things that must shortly come to pass. Under the form of an apocalypse he spake as a prophet" (*C. Anderson Scott*).

20. *The mystery.* Write concerning the mystery, the hidden thing now revealed.—*The seven stars.* Lights in heaven.—*The seven golden candlesticks,* Greek, *lampstands,* RVm. Lights on earth.—*The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches.* The angels bear the same relationship to the churches as the stars do to the candlesticks, that is, their heavenly counterparts. The angels, then, are the churches' better selves, the idealized churches.—*The seven candlesticks are the seven churches.* The churches are the lesser lights, lighted by Christ who is the Light of the world.—Recall now the expression "the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand", and note how beautifully it depicts the glorified Christ's care over them. Dr. Scott points this out: "What seemed to be the case was that each of these Christian communities was lost as a drop

in the surrounding ocean of worldliness and hostility to God, isolated from its neighbors many miles away across the hills, far from help and at the mercy of men. What was really true, as revealed to the Apostle in his vision, was that each of these Churches formed part of a perfect whole represented by the mystic number seven (verse 20), that all of them were held together by the unseen presence in their midst of the risen Son of Man, that, each of these Churches as it was seen by God (the angels of the Churches) was held in the hand of him who is mighty to save, who holds the seven stars in his right hand."

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

4. *From him who is and who was and who is to come.* Dean Plumtree recalls the inscription over the temple of Isis at Sais in Egypt: "I am all that has come into being, and that which is, and that which shall be, and no man hath lifted my veil."

18. *I am alive for evermore.* In the face of those oriental systems which threatened men with endless deaths, transmigrations, and metamorphoses, systems which modern paganism seeks to revive, Christianity holds that the faithful pass through one eclipse only into personal, conscious, immortal life. *Dr. W. L. Watkinson.*

18. *I have the keys of death and of Hades.* Keys are symbols of authority. The rabbis taught that the keys of four things are in the hands of God alone: life and the grave, food and rain.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. What have our lessons told us about the Living Christ? What is meant by the geographical term Asia? What were the leading churches of Asia? What have you heard about some of them?

The Book of Revelation. When Paul was in prison at Rome he wrote a beautiful letter to the Church at Phillippi. You recall our lesson in February from that letter. Paul did not tell the Philippians about his sufferings in prison, but he told them that he made mention of them in his prayers, and the letter is full of solicitude for their welfare. Today we turn to the last book of the Bible and see how the thoughts of the Apostle John when he was in prison—exiled to the island of Patmos—turned not upon his own sufferings but to the welfare of the churches of Asia. He sent them a letter, though we call it a Revelation. John's letter is utterly different from Paul's letters. We can not well understand any part of it without understanding the nature of the book as a whole. Study pp. 44-50 of our Introduction.

The Situation in the Churches of Asia. The Christian communities in the Roman province of Asia, seven of whom are especially considered here, were in grave danger, danger both from without and from within. The worship of the reigning emperor as God was being enforced by the government, and the loyalty of the Christian churches to the one only true God was to be tested by persecution of the fiercest kind. The danger from within came from lukewarmness, factions, false doctrines. John's vision came to him that he might renew their faith, embolden their courage, and thus prepare them for the coming trials. "No threats can dismay, no danger can cow, no temptation can overmaster those who have seen with him the Son of Man ever moving through the circle of communities which form his Church—nay, holding them as a circlet of brilliants in his hand. Naught can make them afraid; for they endure as seeing the invisible."

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Patmos is an island in the Ægean Sea, twenty-four miles from the coast of Asia Minor, at Miletus. It is a small island, some sixteen miles square in area. Dean Stanley writes: "The stern, rugged bareness of its broken promontories well suits the historical fact of the relegation of the condemned Christians to its shores, as of a convict to his prison. The view from the topmost peak, or, indeed, from any lofty elevation in the islands, unfolds an unusual sweep, such as well became the Apocalypse, the unveiling of the future to the eyes of the solitary seer. Above, there are always the broad heavens of a Grecian sky;

sometimes bright with its 'white clouds' (Rev. 14.14), sometimes torn with 'lightnings and thunderings' and darkened by 'great hail', or cheered with 'a rainbow like unto an emerald' (Rev. 4.3; 8.7; 11.19; 16.21). Over the high tops of Icaria, Samos, and Naxos rise the mountains of Asia Minor; amongst which would lie, to the north, the circle of the Seven Churches to which his addresses were to be sent. Around him stood the mountains and islands of the Archipelago, (Rev. 6.14; 16.20). When he looked around, above or below, 'the sea' would always occupy the foremost place, the voices of heaven were like the sound of the waves beating on the shore, as 'the sound of many waters' (Rev. 14.2; 19.6); the millstone was 'cast into the sea' (Rev. 18.21); the sea was to 'give up the dead which were in it' (Rev. 20.13)."

The Seven Churches are named in verse 11 in the order in which they would be reached by a traveler going northward from Ephesus. They were all on the main postal route, "the great circular road that bound together the most populous, wealthy, and influential part of the province".

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

The seven lampstands (candlesticks) are the seven churches. The churches were lights, but they had been lighted from the Light of the World through the agency of Paul, the great lamplighter. Dr. J. H. Jowett in a memorial sermon for Joseph Parker, said:—"I have stood upon the Calton Hill in Edinburgh,—stood there in the darkening twilight, and gazed out over the vast, vague, and shadowy city. And I have seen the lamplighter going his rounds, and I have tracked his progress as he kindled lamp after lamp until the lovely Princes Street stood out, an unbroken line of golden light. And I have seen this other lamplighter in the spiritual kingdom, Joseph Parker, pass down highways of the truth upon which I have looked with dim uncertainty, and he has lit lamp after lamp, until to many thousands the streets have been bright with wondrous illumination. This is the work of the Christian preacher and *teacher,* to hold up God's Word as a light to guide fellow-pilgrims."

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils. Where is Philadelphia? How old is it? The United States Mint, you know, is in Philadelphia, and in the mint there is a very ancient coin. It is at least two thousand years old, and came from the city of Philadelphia in Asia Minor. It was to that ancient city of Philadelphia and six other cities of the province of Asia, that John, about two thousand years ago, addressed a great book, the last one in the Bible. What is it?

For Older Pupils. Do you recall how Longfellow begins the First Interlude of his "Christus"?

> O breath of God! O my delight
> In many a vigil of the night,
> Like the great voice in Patmos heard
> By John, the Evangelist of the Word,
> I hear thee behind me saying: Write
> In a book the things that thou hast seen,
> The things that are, and that have been
> And the things that shall hereafter be!

Why does he call John "the Evangelist of the Word"? What is the reference to "the great voice in Patmos heard by John"? What other allusion has the stanza to our lesson?

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I He Made us to be Kings and Priests, AV.

The Ultimate Aim of Redemption. He "loosed", and then he ennobled. After emancipation there came enfranchisement. We had been in the servitude of the evil one, the poor slaves of an appalling tyranny. Now we are made a Kingdom, we become citizens, endowed with a sublime franchise, the possessors of unspeakable privileges and rights. We are made a "Kingdom of priests". Every child has the right to share the sovereignty of Jesus, and to enjoy free

access into the most secret place of the Father's presence. No longer does he call us "servants", but "friends". There is no closed door between us and him. We have "the run of the house". We may be "at home with the Lord". This is the issue of the primal loving! The ultimate aim of redemption is the creation of a family of sanctified children, reigning as kings and queens, in the possession of spiritual powers, and enjoying happy and intimate fellowship with one another and with their Father in heaven. *Dr. J. H. Jowett,* in *Apostolic Optimism.*

We have Come into a New Epoch. One travels across what are known as the Bad Lands of the West; a long, treeless road; the hot sun heating the sand, and the sand adding its heat to the atmosphere; great and various colored rocks lifting themselves up in all manner of castellated forms in wonderful beauty, and here and there a tree or a little oasis of green grass where there is some running stream, or spring. But by and by, after the long day, the traveler begins to approach the Eastern border of the Bad Lands; the trees grow more numerous, the grass grows thicker, and presently he finds himself in a garden full of luxurious vegetation. So, in the olden times, men traveled through the world as though it were a desert. There were prophets who were oases in the desert; here and there men who heard the voice of God, felt the presence of God, were stirred by the influences of God, and reported to their less happy fellows what they heard and saw and felt. But, for the most part, men lived without the knowledge of God; they had not yet reached the moral and spiritual development in which the knowledge of God was possible. As spiritual development increased the appreciation of God increased. The numbers that knew him, realized him, rejoiced in him, increased. With the coming of Christ there was still larger vision, and now, if we did but know it, we have passed the desert, we have passed the oases, we have come into that epoch in which all the children of God may be prophets of God, priests unto him, kings ruling by his power, prophets listening to his word and interpreting his word to others. *Dr. Lyman Abbott,* in *The Life that Really Is.*

II The Banishment of Fear

Fear Not. It seems strange to us that John of all men in the world, should be afraid of Jesus. And yet, in his old age, with all his experience of the Master, when the vision of the glorified Christ flashed upon him, he fell in consternation and terror at his feet.

There are times with us all when fear seems to have its way; and I doubt if any people who believe in Jesus can think of his appearance in glory without some qualm of dread. But I am certain it was never meant to be so. Jesus is never once represented to us as one fitted to inspire terror. He comes rather to comfort and to bless. Martin Luther tells us that in his youth, while he was still a devout member of the Roman Catholic Church, he was walking one day at Eisleben in his priest's robes following the procession of the Mass, when suddenly he was overcome by the thought that the Sacrament, carried by the vicar-general (Dr. Staupitz), was really Jesus Christ (as he then believed) in person. "A cold sweat," he says, "covered my body, and I believed myself dying of terror". Afterwards he confessed his fears to Dr. Staupitz, when the latter (one of the more enlightened of the old school) replied: "Your thoughts are not of Christ. Christ never alarms; he comforts." "These words," adds Luther, "filled me with joy, and were a great consolation to me". Our text brings us the same message. To everyone who like John is fearful and afraid the Savior says, "Fear not."

What is it we are not to fear? There are three main objects of terror, against which we are here bidden to encourage ourselves. "Fear not to live," says Jesus, "for I am the Living One". It may come to the young and hopeful with a strange sound, that anyone should fear to live; but there are few that have advanced far into mature experience, who will not understand something of the dread which life can inspire. You have had your deep trials, and you have shuddered sometimes when they have come and gone, leaving the bitterness behind, to think how you could ever take up the burden of life again and march as bravely as before. But the Master lays his right hand upon you and says: "Fear not"; life may be all the richer for this dark experience Hope may have

a joyful resurrection, and love and faith may be stronger and purer than before.

And next comes the message: "Fear not to die, for I was dead." The dread of death lies possibly in two things—the strangeness of the experience, and the necessity of letting go all that has grown so dear to us in life. "To die," says Peter Pan, "will be a dreadfully big adventure"; if men knew more about it they might not dread it as they do; for few can face it like Charles Kingsley, who looked forward to death, he tells us, "with a reverent curiosity". But should it not remove this uneasy feeling of strangeness when we hear the voice of Jesus saying, "Fear not, I was dead"? In other words, we are to go through this new experience with our hands clasped by One who has been through it, and knows the way.

And then does not the glorified Savior add, "Fear not what comes after death, for I am alive for evermore, and I have the keys of death and Hades"? After all the glimpses of the unseen which Christ and his Gospel have given us, it remains to us all the great unknown. Ah, you say, but does not the scripture tell us that after death comes the Judgment? Yes, but Jesus lays his right hand upon us, and says, "Fear not; it is the Judgment Seat of Christ. It is before me you will appear, the Living One who was dead, who died for you, and who lives to give repentance to his people and the forgiveness of sins." "There is one fact," says John Ruskin, "and no question at all concerning the Judgment, which was only at this time beginning to dawn on me, that men had been curiously judging themselves by always calling the day they expected *Dies iræ*—"day of wrath"—instead of *Dies amoris*—"day of love." "The Judgment Seat of Christ"—why should we fear it? *Condensed* from a *Sermon* by *John Waddell.*

Fear not Death. East of Edinburgh, England, there is a long tunnel. The writer of "The Rope of Hair" tells this incident about it. There was a certain old lady who lived in the country, and she had a dread of the long tunnel, and so although her friends laughed at her and tried to tease her about it, she always used to get out at Abbyhill and go all the way round into Edinburgh. One day when the train reached Abbyhill she was asleep. Her friends did not awake her, so she passed the tunnel she so much dreaded in her sleep, and never knew it, and when she opened her eyes she was in the midst of the city.

Thus it will be of our fear of death. We shall fall asleep, and opening our eyes, we shall be in the city of God.

God still Regnant. In November, 1914, when the great European struggle was in progress, an editorial in "The Friend" said:

Great emphasis of human passion, on notable occasions, has filled the skies with clouds that have seemed to hide the face of God. "Where is your God?" was the blatant outcry of the French Revolution. When Joshua came down with Moses from the Mount, and heard the uproar of the people as they danced about the molten calf shouting, "These be thy gods, O Israel," he said very truly, "There is the noise of war in the camp."

At such times human folly and human passion are so pronounced and close at hand that they rivet human attention. They occupy the foreground with the smoke of their conflict, and there is no background discernible. But the background is there. It is always there, and there is where God is, always regnant; and we know this is so, when the clouds clear away, and we see things in their true perspective.

At a critical period in the Civil War, when the mobs in New York city struck at the life of the nation, and the metropolis was in a frenzy of commotion and uncertainty, Garfield stood forth before the restless multitude of loyal citizens and quoted from the ninety-seventh Psalm: "The Lord reigneth. Clouds and darkness are round about him; but righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne." That message quieted those excited patriots, as it should quiet all hearts in the awful days of conflict of nations in Europe. God is always in the background when we come to think of it. That is his chosen vantage-ground in the strategy of Divine Providence.

III We are Lights

The Churches are Candlesticks. The business of the Church, like that of the Eddystone Lighthouse, is to "give light and to save life". Ye shall be my

witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa and Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth, said Jesus in our first lesson of the year. When the church sends the Gospel into heathen lands it is giving light. When the individual members live lives that are pleasing unto God, they are giving forth light. Christ meant every Christian to be a light.

Christians Should Be Luminous. I shall never forget looking at the battered face of an old prize-fighter in whom this Inner Shrine had been illumined. Although the marks of sin and the scars of the fight were absolutely indelible, his face was transfigured from within by this Divine light shining through.

Christian men and women should be luminous; they are lights in the world, holding forth the Word of Light, the Great Light, the Centre of Light, of which they are the light-bearers. Through and through them shines the light to this dark world. *Dr. A. T. Schofield,* in *Studies in the Highest Thought.*

Let your Light Shine. Away out in the prairie regions, when meetings are held at night in the log schoolhouses, the announcement of the meeting is given out in this way: "A meeting will be held by early candlelight." The first man who comes brings a tallow dip with him. It does not light the building much; but it is better than none at all. The next man brings his candle; and the next family bring their candles. By the time the house is full there is plenty of light. So if we all shine a little, there will be a good deal of light. If we cannot all be light-houses, any one of us can at any rate be a tallow candle. *D. L. Moody.*

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The Book of Revelation. See pp. 44-50 of our Introduction.
2. The First Topic.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. Of what is each of the seven churches assured in this chapter? 2. What is the special praise given the church in Ephesus? 3. For what is this church reproved? 4. What is the special praise given the church in Smyrna? 5. Is this the only church which is not reproved? 6. What is the special praise given to the church in Pergamum? 7. For what is it reproved? 8. Where was Pergamum? 9. Who was stationed at Ephesus after Paul left Asia? (1 Tim. 1.3.) 10. When did John go to Ephesus? (*Guide,* p. 459.) 11. In connection with verse 7 look up Gen. 2.9; 3.22; Rev. 22.2. 12. Why is the description of Christ in verse 12 especially fitting for the church in Pergamum? (*Guide,* p. 458.) 13. What is the meaning of "Satan's throne", verse 13? (*Guide,* p. 458.) 14. Look up these other references in Revelation to overcoming: 2.17, 26, 28; 3.5, 12, 21. 15. What is the suggestion in regard to the Nicolaitans? (*Guide,* p. 458.) 16. What does "the second death" mean? (*Guide,* p. 458.) 17. When did Jesus speak about names being written in heaven? (Lu. 10.20.)

Questions to Think About. 1. What do you know about Ephesus? 2. Smyrna? 3. What is the common framework of all the addresses to the churches? (*Guide,* p. 459.) 4. What is the comforting thought of verse 1? 5. Of verse 2? 6. Of verse 13? 7. What does it mean to "try them that call themselves prophets, and they are not"? 8. What is the meaning of "didst leave thy first love"? 9. Who often used the first part of the first sentence of verse 7? 10. What is the tree of life? (*Guide,* p. 457.) 11. In what sense were the people of Smyrna "rich"? 12. What is the meaning of the last part of verse 9? (*Guide,* p. 457.) 13. Why "ten days", verse 10? (*Guide,* p. 458.)

Questions upon the Book of Revelation. 1. What other apocalypses are extent? 2. What is their character? 3. What is the difference between prophecy and apocalypse? 4. What four views are held in regard to the interpretation of Revelation? (See pp. 44-47.)

Memory and Note-Book Work. Memorize the selection from "Pilgrims Progress" on page 463. Begin a new Note-Book entitled the Book of Revelation. Today write what you know about the writer, the date, and the nature of an Apocalypse. See pp. 44, 45. Leave several pages blank and write A Paraphrase of the First Chapter.

FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH

Golden Text

Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life. Revelation 2.10

LESSON Revelation 2.1-17 MEMORIZE verse 7

1 To the angel of the church in Ephesus write:
These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, he that walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks: 2 I know thy works, and thy toil and patience, and that thou canst not bear evil men, and didst try them that call themselves apostles, and they are not, and didst find them false; 3 and thou hast patience and didst bear for my name's sake, and hast not grown weary. 4 But I have *this* against thee, that thou didst leave thy first love. 5 Remember therefore whence thou art fallen, and repent and do the first works; or else I come to thee, and will move thy candlestick out of its place, except thou repent. 6. But this thou hast, that thou hatest the works of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. 7 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches. To him that overcometh, to him will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God.
8 And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write:
These things saith the first and the last, who was dead, and lived *again:* 9 I know thy tribulation, and thy poverty (but thou art rich), and the blasphemy of them that say they are Jews, and they are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. 10 Fear not the things which thou art about to suffer: behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life. 11 He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches. He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.
12 And to the angel of the church in Pergamum write:
These things saith he that hath the sharp two-edged sword: 13 I know where thou dwellest, *even* where Satan's throne is; and thou holdest fast my name, and didst not deny my faith, even in the days of Antipas my witness, my faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan dwelleth. 14 But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there some that hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication. 15 So hast thou also some that hold the teaching of the Nicolaitans in like manner. 16 Repent therefore; or else I come to thee quickly, and I will make war against them with the sword of my mouth. 17 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches. To him that overcometh, to him will I give of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, and upon the stone a new name written, which no one knoweth but he that receiveth it.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE.

I. To the Church in Ephesus, 1-7.
II. To the Church in Smyrna, 8-11.
III. To the Church in Pergamum, 12-17.

1. *The angel of the Church.* Recall the last lesson.—*He that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, he that walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks.* See 1.20. These words assure the Church of Ephesus that the Living Christ is with them.

2. *I know thy works.* This is said to five of the churches. Compare Jn. 4.47. —*Thy toil and patience.* Instead of *patience* the marginal rendering is *steadfastness.* "Poor little church of some few hundreds gathered out of the many

thousands in the great city, passing cautiously through the streets to their place of meeting; prepared to meet persecution; laboring with zeal and faith to make known to others the good news which they had received, that 'God was in Christ reconciling the world unto itself'; putting up with the disabilities of their new relation to the world, its contempt, its dislike, its hostility, its possible cruelty; bearing all this with patient endurance as seeing him who is invisible, and yet wondering sometimes what is to be the end of it! Who cares, in Ephesus? To such thoughts the answer comes, 'I know thy works'. Every act of faith, every ministry of self-denial, every humble acceptance of the Cross for the Master's sake, finds its recognition from the Master's eye, has its record in heaven" (*Scott*).—*Didst try them that call themselves prophets, and they are not.* There were many false teachers in those days, and the ability to discern their falseness was needful. Compare John's statement in his First Epistle, "Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world," and see Mt. 7.16. So Ignatius praised them for the same ability, writing to them: "I have learned that certain persons passed through you from yonder, bringing evil doctrine: whom ye suffered not to sow seed in you, for ye stopped your ears, so that ye might not receive the seed sown by them."

4. *Thou didst leave thy first love.* Their love to God had waned. Compare Jer. 2.2. "Patience and unremitting toil are of little value, if the spirit of love is absent."

5. *Repent.* A lukewarm love demands repentance.—*Do the first works.* Such as were inspired by the first eager love.—*I will remove thy candlestick out of its place.* "If the flame of Christian love dies down, the candlestick will be put away as useless, that is, the organized church will come to an end. Compare Jn. 15.6." We know that the Church of Ephesus prospered for centuries, hence we conclude that it repented, but recalling the little railway station, and near-by hotel, and the few wretched houses and temple ruins of Ayasaluk, the modern Ephesus, we realize that the proud candlestick was finally removed from its place.

Golden Candlestick, from the Arch of Titus, Rome

6. *The Nicolaitans.* Mentioned again in verse 15. In the absence of knowledge concerning them, surmises are many. Professor Ramsay's suggestion is as good as any, that they approved of burning incense before the emperor's statue, as the Roman law required.

7. *He that hath an ear let him hear.* A familiar saying of Christ's: Mt. 11.15, etc.—*What the spirit saith.* John's message comes from the Spirit, Rev. 1.10.—*To him that overcometh.* Who continually overcomes.—*To him will I give to eat of the tree of life.* He shall enjoy all that eternal life has in store for him. Compare Gen. 2-9; 3.22; Rev. 22.2.—*Paradise.* A Persian word which means garden. "The later Jews employed the word to denote various ideas of heavenly blessedness."

8. *To the angel of the church in Smyrna.* See the last lesson.—*The first and the last.* See the last lesson.

9. *I know.* This and the Church of Philadelphia are the only churches of which only words of praise are spoken. It is the only one of the seven cities in which there is today a strong Chistian church. Of the total population of 250,000, more than half are Christians.—*But thou art rich.* Rich spiritually. Compare "Blessed are ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of God", Lk. 6.20.—*Blasphemy.* Or, *reviling,* RVm.—*Of them that say they are Jews, and they are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.* They belonged to the Jewish race, and were Jews in name, but they were traitors to the name, for they served not God, but Satan.

10. *The devil is about to cast some of you into prison.* Compare Rev. 12.17; 13.4; 1 Pet. 5.8.—*That ye may be tried.* Compare Jas. 1.3, 12; 1 Pet. 1.7; 4.12. —*Ten days.* Numbers in Revelation are not to be tkaen literally, and this expression merely stands for *a short time.—Be thou faithful.* Cicero spoke of Smyrna as "the most faithful of our allies".—*Unto death.* An intensive, not an *extensive* term, referring to the faithfulness great enough to endure death, if need be.—*And I will give thee the crown of life.* "Eternal life will crown your victorious death." The local reference may have been, as Professor Ramsay suggests, the garland of splendid buildings encircling the rounded hill Pagos, which was called Smyrna's crown. It is also recalled that Smyrna was famous for its games in which the prize was a garland.

11. *The second death.* "A Jewish phrase for the final condemnation of sinners: compare Rev. 20.6, 14; 21.8; Mt. 10.28."

12. *He that hath the sharp two-edged sword.* See Rev. 1.6. Pergamum was the seat of the Roman Proconsul, the man who had "the power of the sword", the power of life and death over prisoners brought to him, including those accused of being Christians. The message came to the people of Pergamum from the One whose power was far mightier.

13. *I know where thou dwellest, even where Satan's throne is.* About 29 B. C. a temple was erected at Pergamum and dedicated to Augustus. Because the city became a center of the worship of the emperor, it is called "Satan's throne". —*Didst not deny my faith.* They were true to God, in spite of the order to worship the emperor.—*Who was killed among you.* Evidently a martyr to his faith.

14. *The teaching of Balaam.* Compare Num. 25.1-9; 31.16; Acts 15.28; 1 Cor. 8.9, 10; Jude verse 11. Balaam coveted the money offered him by the king of the Moabites if he would prophesy against Israel, but was prevented from so doing by God. Then he told the king to introduce among the Israelites beautiful Moabitish women who would lead the former to partake of the heathen as well as of the Jewish festivals. This advice was followed, and proved a stumbling-block to Israel, resulting in gross immorality and idolatry. There were those in the church at Pergamum who similarly advocated combining the heathen and the Christian religions. Paul had said: "You can not eat at the table of the Lord and at the table of devils."

15. *The teaching of the Nicolaitans in like manner.* As Balak has a false teacher in Balaam, so the people of Pergamum had one in the Nicolaitans.

16. *I will make war against them with the sword of my mouth.* "The glorified Christ is in this book a warrior, who fights with the sharp sword of the word."

17. *The hidden manna.* Compare Ex. 16.33; Heb. 9.4. The reference may be to the Jewish traditional belief that the ark with its pot of manna had been hidden by Jeremiah, and would be restored when the Messiah came. The manna symbolized Christ, the bread of life: see Jn. 6.31-35. Or the symbolism may be borrowed from the Old Testament, and may mean that while in olden times only the High Priest could enter the Holy of Holies and partake of the shewbread, now everyone may have access to God.—*I will give him a white stone, and upon the stone a new name written, which no one knoweth but he that receiveth it.* There have been many interpretations of this symbolism. See Light from Oriental Life. Perhaps the best interpretation is that it is an allusion to the prevalent superstition that there were certain passwords, or names of power, by means of which the ascending spirit could make sure of entrance into one heaven after another. "Did others speak of passwords giving a right to enter heaven, he would give to him that overcometh a surer password for entrance to a truer heaven. Was the availing name, which once they had longed to find, a name which each man should have for himself, then Christ would give to him a 'new name', in the deep sense of the Bible, a new nature, the real key to the real heaven" (*Scott*). "Wouldst thou know the kind of new name thou wilt obtain? Overcome. Before that thou wilt ask in vain, and after that thou wilt read it inscribed on the white stone" (*Bengel*).

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

9. *Of them that say they are Jews, and they are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.* Such Jews were found by this time in all the chief cities of the empire,

a powerful body, and unscrupulous in their hostility to the followers of Christ. But they appear to have been unusually strong and unusually bitter at Smyrna. For when some fifty years later many Christians perished in the persecution, and amongst them the saintly Polycarp, it is recorded that the Jews were eager in bringing fagots to the theater for the burning of the Christians, "Sabbath day though it was". *C. Anderson Scott,* in *The Book of the Revelation.*

17. *I will give him a white stone, and upon the stone a new name written.* The chief form of pleasure at this time, even in the Asiatic cities, was attendance at the public games, or participation in them. The Christians were denied both. They could not be present as spectators at a form of sport which was cruel, immortal, and pagan. It must be remembered that the very games were usually held in honor of one or other of the gods or goddesses. Still less could they take part in the games as gladiators or even athletes. Now it was customary for the victor in a gladiatorial contest to receive an ivory tablet with the letters SP inscribed upon it. These letters stood for the word *spectatus, i. e.* honored, distinguished. It was a new name, and the victor was proud of it. Moreover, this tablet with the new name upon it gave him the right of entrance to public banquets. The Christian must still be an athlete, a gladiator, though his adversary now is the devil in the shape of daily trial and bitter persecution. But he has his reward. "To him that overcometh will I give a white stone, and upon the stone a new name written, which no one knoweth but he that receiveth it." *Expository Times.*

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Review Questions. Where was Ephesus? For what was it famous? What happened to Paul at Ephesus? Where was Smyrna? What was Paul's record at Smyrna? Who is symbolized in the first chapter of Revelation by "the angel of the church"? By the seven stars? The seven golden candlesticks? Who is said to hold the seven stars in his hand, and what does this figurative speech mean?

The Letters to the Seven Churches. In the second and third chapters of Revelation, we have addresses to seven churches in Asia. As Professor Ramsay says, it is probable that each church is regarded as the head and center of a group of local churches. Certain it is that the wording of each letter is delicately adapted to the history and conditions of the community to which it is addressed.

The framework of the address is in each case the same. First, there is the command to write; second, there are the introductory words, "These things saith" followed by a presentation of the Speaker, the Christ, under one of the aspects of his power as seen in the vision of the first chapter; third, there is a characterization of the Church, preceded by the words "I know"; fourth, an exhortation and an appeal for attention in the words, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches"; fifth, a promise to him "that overcometh."

John's Relation to the Church of Ephesus. Paul founded the church at Ephesus, and later spent two years there. Timothy continued his work, and traditions which date as far back as the second century say that John then took Timothy's place.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

Ephesus was the foremost church in the province of Asia. See page 331.

Smyrna, fifty miles north of Ephesus, was a rival of Ephesus, a very ancient city. In 23 A. D. it had sent representatives to Rome to plead against ten other cities for the privilege of erecting a temple in honor of Tiberius, and had won because of the antiquity of the city, the loyalty to Rome, and special services rendered to the Roman army. The so-called tomb of Polycarp, a disciple of John who was martyred in 155 A. D., is shown here.

By continuing along the coast for about forty miles and then going northeastward for fifteen miles up the valley of the Caicus, one reaches Pergamum. The city was noted for its temple of Æsculapius, who was worshiped in the form of a living serpent. Coins of the city have a representation of a rod encircled by a serpent. The Nicephorim was a famous grove with many temples.

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

One of the most difficult things in teaching is not to leave one's first love, to maintain one's first enthusiasm for the work. One loses heart because pupils are trying, one becomes discouraged because he would reap without waiting for the due season, one wearies in well-doing and begins to ask, not "How much can I do?" but, "How little can I do?" Beware of losing one's first love. Keep in view the goal and the promise sure. "Ah, if we were employed like the seraphim," says one, "to carry fire direct from God's altar to human lives, it would be so exciting and delightful! But to go on with the same task just because it is the King's command, to fill our little sphere of unrewarded duty not knowing how it is to glorify God—that is hard; and nothing but a constant reflooding of our hearts with the love of Jesus can enable us to continue our course with joy. It is possible always to carry on our work with joy; but that can only be if we never lose the sense of privilege, if we believe that every bit of work we do is truly by the King's command."

Make sure of having the hidden manna. Hidden manna: what is it? Hidden resources, strengthening and sustaining food. "There is a great contrast in the amount of hidden manna that men possess," writes Dr. Jowett. "Take the first half-dozen of your friends, and try to measure the length of their tempers; try to put your finger just at the point where irritability begins. You will be amazed to find how different are the lengths you will have to measure out. One man swiftly exhausts his little store, and has no hidden manna upon which to draw. We say, "His patience was soon spent". Others have hidden manna, and marvellous are their powers of toleration. How long can you go on, how far can you go in an atmosphere of discouragement, ingratitude, apparent ineffectiveness, and open contempt? How long can you go on teaching a Sunday-school class, and never making a convert? How much hidden manna have you? *Dr. J. H. Jowett,* in *The Silver Lining.*

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils.

Put this temptation underneath thy feet.
To him that overcometh shall be given
The white stone with the new name written on it,
That no man knows save him that doth receive it.

What book of the Bible did Longfellow have in mind when he wrote these words? What chapter and verse? To what people were these words first written? By whom? From whom? To how many churches, or Christian communities, were special messages sent? To which one first? Where is Ephesus? What have we heard about Ephesus in connection with Paul's life?

For Older Pupils. "If we begin to think lightly of matters which our fathers regarded as supreme," says one, "the glory of God will pass from amongst us. In the mystical language of the Book of Revelation, Christ will remove his candlestick from our midst." In this quotation what is the allusion? To what Christian community was this warning given?

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Lukewarmness

I Have This against thee, that thou Hast Left thy First Love. These people were still doing the works, but the inner fire had burnt low, and the works themselves, even though outwardly the same, were not now "the first works" in the eye of God. The external evidence of their faith was like the pointer on a self-registering thermometer: it marked the highest level which their spiritual temperature had reached; but where was the mercury now? We may take it that there never was a community of Christians, of some years' standing, perhaps there never was an individual Christian, to whom at some time or other the Spirit of Christ had not this remonstrance to address: "Thou hast left thy first love." It may be that many, at least, of the works which were prompted by that first love are still being done; and yet God hath this against

us: we have this against ourselves. We say, Where is the blessedness I knew when first I saw the Lord? *C. Anderson Scott,* in *The Book of the Revelation.*

Blurring the Image. I saw once, lying side by side in a great workship, two heads made of metal. The one was perfect; all the features of a noble, manly face came out clear and distinct in their lines of strength and beauty; in the other, scarcely a single feature could be recognized; it was all marred and spoiled. "The metal had been let grow a little too cool, sir," said the man who was showing it to me. I could not help thinking how true that was of many a form more precious than metal. Many a young soul that might be stamped with the image and superscription of the King, while it is warm with the love and glow of early youth, is allowed to grow too cold, and the writing is blurred and the image is marred. *Canon Teignmouth Shore.*

II The Overcoming Life

To him that Overcometh, to him will I give to Eat of the Tree of Life. The promise is constantly "to him that overcometh". The ideal life to the Greek was one of serene pleasantness; the life of the Christian is ever represented as a strenuous conflict in which we must strive to overcome. When we read these verses we feel how severe and tragic was the lot of the primitive Christians.

It has been objected to Rubens' picture of the Crucifixion that he has painted Golgotha like a garden where you can hardly see the skulls for the flowers. It might seem as if in the softening processes of the ages that the Christian life was far from being as stern and sorrowful as of old; that many flowers have sprung up in the place of persecutions and martyrdoms. Yet we, too, have our difficulties, temptations, and sorrows; often as much as we can bear.

Our one duty is to overcome. A poet of scepticism boasts, "I am captain of my soul". If Christ is Captain, I am also; otherwise defeat is inevitable. *Dr. W. L. Watkinson,* in *The Gates of Dawn.*

What is the Overcoming? It is overcoming the perpetual obstacles and difficulties of our present life. It is overcoming the temptations which assail the soul. Perhaps in that sense you might put it in a word. It is overcoming yourselves. The overcoming is overcoming self. There was once on a door in Edinburgh a motto, and it ran: "He that holds, overcomes." And a lad passing the house on his way to school read the motto, but did not understand it. He came home and asked: "What is the meaning of that word 'hold'?" He was told by his parent that it meant to bear with patience—he that holds, overcomes. And the boy passing that motto day by day formed the resolution that he would hold, that he would bear with patience. And that boy became the founder of the great Edinburgh firm of Chambers, and he attributed the extraordinary success of his life to realising the meaning of that motto. "He that holds overcomes."

That is the simplest idea of overcoming, and yet when you reflect upon it it is the way in which most people fail. We can fight a braver battle than against sin, than against difficulty; and many a young life goes under that is unstable, unheroic. It does not see exactly that it only "does", that it cannot bear. He that holds, overcomes. There is on the spiritual side a failure which is exactly the parallel of that—the man who fails spiritually because he is not faithful unto death; he gives in. It is to him that overcometh that he gives to eat of the tree of life.

Can we overcome? We can overcome if there is an adequate power behind, and that adequate power is there—Christ, who is the reward of overcoming. It all turns upon that. The power by which we can overcome cannot be said to be ours. It would be a contradiction in terms to say it is. We have to overcome ourselves. What is the power to overcome the self? It must be another. It is Christ. This is the victory that overcometh the world. "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." He can enable you to overcome. Everyone? Yes, everyone. He can enable us all to overcome. *Condensed* from a *Sermon* by *Dr. Robert F. Horton.*

A Victory of the Spirit. The writer once made a journey by sea from Portland, Oregon, to San Francisco. All those who sat at the engineer's table were strangers to one another, and what was worse, they seemed to have nothing in

common. It was, indeed, an assorted lot of human beings who were far from being satisfied with one another. Among them was a boy who sometimes spoke of his sister; he said she was confined to her room as the result of the rough weather. It became a matter of politeness to inquire for her, because of the boy's evident anxiety and affection for her.

Finally, the sister appeared at the table. It was a startling appearance, and each member of the company was put to it to act as if nothing unusual had happened. The young lady's face was disfigured by a great birthmark; but out of her eyes shone a spirit so transfigured by love, and in her manner there was a courtesy so exquisite, as if all her anxiety was for us, lest we should suffer in her behalf, that we, who had been strangers, and more or less sullen toward one another, at once became united in our desire to do honor to this valiant and beautiful soul.

As for the brother whom we had thought rather shy and dull, he, too, was transformed. His pride in her—a pride that took full cognizance of her peculiar triumph and of all she had overcome—was almost as fine in its way as her great victory over self. We, who had been strangers, became friends who grieved to part, and who grieved most of all at leaving forever one who had faced sorrow and singularity, and overcome them by the sweetness of her spirit and her trust in the abiding compassion and appreciation of others.

Here was one born tragically "odd" who nevertheless achieved a beautiful conformity. She might have shut herself up, and grown sad and suspicious. Instead, she held out her hands to Life as one who looked for great gifts by way of compensation; and she was not denied. *Youth's Companion.*

III Be thou Faithful unto Death, and I will Give thee the Crown of Life

He Won the Race. At the Field Day exercises of the Mercersburg Academy my profoundest admiration was provoked by an incident in the two-mile race. The track is a quarter of a mile around, so that the runners had to cover it eight times to make the two miles. Some twenty young fellows entered the contest, and the race was run in good form; but the lad who got my heartiest applause was not the one who won the prize. Indeed, he was the one who came out last. When the winner scored the goal, this lad of whom I speak was some three-eighths of a mile behind. As he came around the seventh time the trainer insisted that he come off, but he declined. With no chance to win, he persisted in running the race to the end. He had entered for two miles and he was determined to run two miles. As he started on the last lap, the bleachers broke into applause. I thought of the line from the Apocalypse which says: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life;" and I said to myself: "The lad has lost the prize, but he has won the race. If he will put that spirit into life, nothing can keep him down. If in the great race of life he will stick to duty and drive on with the same unswerving fidelity, to the last lap of the road and to the final tick of the clock, the great Judge of awards will give him the crown."

Paint this schoolboy incident on the larger canvas of life and you have the real hero of the world. A man has run the long race. He has lagged behind his fellows, but he has done his best and kept on. He has persisted through countless difficulties. He has little applause, for he is a mere plodder. Few cheers lift up his tired feet, and no crowds shout his name with wild huzzas. He is running a tame race, and again and again some fleeter-footed runner leaves him behind, but he plods on, his breath coming faster and harder as he nears the end.

At last he staggers across the goal line. He has put himself into the race such as it was. He has been faithful unto death, and, gasping in the throes of dissolution, he turns his face towards the Judge. Then a strange thing happens, for as he dies he lives, as he fails he succeeds, as he fails he finds the Rock of Ages beneath his feet; and out of the infinite, a hand is stretched forth to garland his dying brow with victory. *James I. Vance,* in *Tendency.*

Heedless of the Crown. The Interpreter led them first into a room where was a man that could look no way but downwards, with a muck-rake in his hand: there stood also one over his head with a celestial crown in his hand, and proffered him that crown for his muck-rake; but the man did neither look

up nor regard, but raked to himself the stones, the small sticks, and the dust of the floor.

Then said Christiana: "I persuade myself that I know somewhat the meaning of this; for this is the figure of a man in this world; is it not, good Sir?"

"Thou hast said right," said he, "and his muck-rake doth show his carnal mind. And, whereas thou seest him rather give heed to rake up straws and sticks, and the dust of the floor, than do what he says that calls him from above, with the celestial crown in his hand; it is to show that heaven is but as a fable to some, and that things here are counted the only things substantial. Now, whereas it was also showed thee, that the man could look no way but downwards, it is to let thee know, that earthly things, when they are with power upon men's minds, quite carry their hearts away from God." *John Bunyan,* in *Pilgrim's Progress.*

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

"I know thy works." Every act of faith, every ministry of self-denial, every humble acceptance of the cross for the Master's sake, finds its recognition from the Master's eye, has its record in heaven. *C. Anderson Scott.*

What struggle do you struggle with, as I with mine? What foes do you sharpen conscience upon—sharpen conscience upon or break its edge? Let these things be known to ourselves and God. The rest is enough. We are all soldiers in the same war, and our Lord's promise comes to each of us. *Dr. George Adam Smith.*

The time is short.
If thou wouldst work for God, it must be now;
If thou wouldst win the garland for thy brow,
Redeem the time. *Bonar.*

Our Prayer. O thou who wast dead and liveth again, "I know thy works", thou hast said—nothing is hidden from the eyes of him with whom we have to do. "I know where thou dwellest"—thou knowest the conditions amidst which we live, the needs and difficulties and temptations that we have to meet. What comforting and strengthening thoughts are these! And thy promises, too, are for us, O Crownèd Christ! If we overcome, to us wilt thou give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the Paradise of God; if we overcome, to us wilt thou give of the hidden manna, and the white stone with the new name written upon it. With thy help we shall gain the victory. Keep us ever close to thee.

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. What would the Divine message be to our church?
2. The danger of growing lukewarm in the Christian life. See the First Topic.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. Read Ezekiel's vision of the ideal city. (Ezek. 40.) 2. What does Jeremiah say about a bride's regard for her adornments, in 2.32? 3. Where in Isaiah is the first expression of verse 4 used? (Isa. 25.8.) 4. With verse 23 compare Isa. 60.19, 20 and Jn. 5.35. 5. What is said elsewhere in Revelation about the book of life? (Rev. 3.5; 13.8; 20.12.) 6. What did Jesus say about heaven in Jn. 14.1-3?

Questions to Think About. 1. Who is speaking in the first verse? 2. Why is the absence of the sea expressed, verse 1? (*Guide,* p. 464.) 3. Why is there no temple in the Holy City? 4. What does the symbolic language in the description of the city express? 5. What is heaven? 6. What is the most comforting thought of the twenty-first chapter?

Memory and Note-Book Work. Memorize Rev. 21.1-4, 22-27, and Felicia Hemans' stanzas on p. 467. In your Note-Book about Revelation, add an account of how the book is interpreted by the various schools. Follow your account of last week's lesson by A Paraphrase of the Messages to the Churches.

Questions upon the Book of Revelation. 1. What is the purpose of the book? 2. What is its message? 3. How is its symbolism to be understood? 4. Describe the book as literature. 5. What are its lessons for today?

THE HOLY CITY

Golden Text

Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell with them, and they shall be his peoples. Revelation 21.3

LESSON Revelation 21.1-4, 9-14, 22-27; 22.1-5: verses 21.1-4, 22-27 printed

MEMORIZE verses 21.3, 4

1 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth are passed away; and the sea is no more. 2 And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. 3 And I heard a great voice out of the throne saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell with them, and they shall be his peoples, and God himself shall be with them, *and be* their God: 4 and he shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain any more: the first things are passed away.

22 And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God the Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple thereof. 23 And the city hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine upon it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the lamp thereof *is* the Lamb. 24 And the nations shall walk amidst the light thereof: and the kings of the earth bring their glory into it. 25 And the gates thereof shall in no wise be shut by day (for there shall be no night there): 26 and they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it: 27 and there shall in no wise enter into it anything unclean, or he that maketh an abomination and a lie: but only they that are written in the Lamb's book of life.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

I. The Vision of a New Heaven and a New Earth, 21.1.
II. The Vision of the Holy City, 21.2-22.5.
  1. The Voice of God, 21.3-8.
  2. The Description of the City, 21.9-27.
  3. The River of Life, 22.1-5.

1. *I saw a new heaven and a new earth.* Paradise lost was a garden; Paradise regained is a city. There are two words in Greek which are translated new: *νέος*, which means new in appearance, and *καινός*, which means new in kind. It is the latter word which is used here. Compare Isa. 65.17; 66.22; Mt. 26.29.—*For the first heaven and the first earth are passed away.* "We need not be staggered by this prophecy, for science delights to show that many heavens and many earths have already passed away. As the geological world was the rough draft, or a series of rough drafts, of this more beautiful and finished world on which we now gaze, so this present world is a dim foreshadowing of the ultimate spiritualized theater of human life" (*Watkinson*).—*And the sea is no more.* "The sea has fulfilled its last function, Rev. 20.13. St. John, an exile in sea-girt Patmos, regarded with no favor the element which mounted guard over his prison, and parted him from the churches of Asia. For the ancients generally the sea possessed none of the attractions which it has for moderns." "This is a metaphor which teaches that the dark, the wild, the cruel, the terrible, the savage, the dangerous and destructive organisms, elements and forces of nature shall be no more. As the monsters of the antediluvian ages vanished, so shall the dark and tragical things of our age cease from nature, and no longer perplex and distress the sons of God" (*Watkinson*).

2. *The holy City, new Jerusalem.* The new earth must have a new city.—*Made ready as a bride adorned for her husband.* This is a familiar Hebrew figure of speech to represent God's relation to his people: compare Isa. 54.5;

61.10; 62.5; Hosea 2.19; Ezek. 16.6-16. "Let us rejoice and be exceeding glad ... for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready", was announced in Rev. 19.7.

3. *I heard a great voice.* God's voice.—*Out of the throne.* Compare Rev. 19.5.—*His people.* Many nations.

4. *He shall wipe away every tear.* Compare Isa. 25.8.—*The first things are passed away.* The things that pass are the terrible things—tears, death, mourning, crying, pain.

9. *I will show thee the bride, the wife of the Lamb.* "Here the great Christian idea of the Church in its absolute unity finds its culmination. The individuals redeemed who compose the multitude that no man can number, who as dwellers in the city still preserve their individualities, are now regarded in their oneness in Christ, as forming but one body, one personality, and that personality is the Bride of Christ" (*Scott*).

16. *The city lieth foursquare.* In this verse the city is represented as a cube, 1,300 miles in length and breadth and height. A city 1,300 miles high shows, as Dr. Milligan says, "an intentional absence of verisimilitude". Its symbolical meaning is that the whole city is a sanctuary like the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle (verses 15-17).

21. The symbolical language here expresses the thought that the splendor is beyond the power of language to describe.

22. *I saw no temple therein.* Because none is needed, for the whole city is God's temple. "These words will soon be used, if they are not, in a sense, true already, of that famous Temple of Philæ in Upper Egypt. There it has stood for two millenniums and more, visited from generation to generation by men who came to worship the gods to whom they supposed that the fertility of Egypt was due. Now it is en-isled and half submerged in the vast lake of Assouan, which secures the perennial flow of life-giving waters to the land below. So there is no temple in heaven, because that of which it was the symbol has taken its place. 'The tabernacle of God is with men,' and 'the river of the water of life' flows through 'the streets thereof'" (*Scott.*)—*The Lord God the Almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple thereof.*

> "But what is heaven, great God, compared to thee?
> Without thy presence, heaven's no heaven to me"
>
> (*Francis Quarles*).

23. *The glory of God did lighten it.* Compare Isa. 60.19, 20.—*The lamp.* Compare Jn. 5.35.

24. Compare Isa. 60.3. "No such world-wide influence was ever the lot of the older Jerusalem. Rome came nearer to the ideal in her relation to the provinces of the Empire, and her influence over the countries where she exercised the rights of suzerain. But the light of Rome was in the end to go out in darkness, as the Seer foresaw (18.23). The Church alone possesses an unfailing source of illumination, which radiates far beyond her borders" (*Swete*).

25, 26. *Gates.* Greek, *portals,* RVm. See verses 12-21.—*The glory and honor.* Compare Isa. 60.3.

27. *The Lamb's book of life.* Compare Rev. 3.5; 13.8; 20.12. The origin of this symbol is found in the roll, or register, of citizens of Jerusalem, to which Isaiah refers in 4.3. Moses' prayer, "And if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written", Ex. 32.32, is the first use of the figurative expression, where God is thought of as himself keeping the names of his people in a roll or book. Jesus used a similar figure when he bade his disciples rejoice because their "names are written in heaven."

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

2. *The holy city, new Jerusalem.* The Holy City of the Old Testament had been in ruins for a quarter of a century, and Hadrian's new city was not yet planned. The New Jerusalem of the Seer belongs to another order; it is of heavenly origin, a city "whose builder and maker is God", Heb. 11.10. Some years before the fall of the old city the thought of a celestial city had been familiar to St. Paul and his school: compare Gal. 4.26. Jewish literature also is full of the hope of an ideal Jerusalem, based on Old Testament prophecy.

2. *Made ready as a bride adorned for her husband.* Mrs. Goshu-el-Howie, writing in the *Sunday School Times,* says: "When the bridal day arrives, it is the culminating point in a Syrian girl's existence. Former brides, young married women, crowd about her, dye her hair auburn with henna, stain her nails, plait her hair, paint her eyelids with höhl (eye-salve, Rev. 3.18) and her cheeks with rouge (2 K. 9.30), put on the bridal array, usually a brocaded silk dress, arrange the orange blossoms in her hair, and leave her nothing to do but to put on her ornaments—the chains and the bracelets, the spangled ornaments, the headband, the earrings, and the rings (Isa. 3.19) to which the up-to-date Syrian bride now adds a gold watch, which she displays on her breast."

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Book of Revelation. See pages 44-50 of our Introduction.

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils.

And the Monk Felix closed his book,
And long, long,
With rapturous look,
He listened to the song,
And hardly breathed or stirred,
Until he saw, as in a vision,
The land Elysian,
And in the heavenly city heard
Angelic feet
Falling on the golden flagging of the street.

Thus speaks Longfellow in the "Golden Legend". Instead of the Monk Felix put the Apostle John, and we see him as he gained his glimpse of the heavenly city. What does he call that city? New Jerusalem. Why do we call the largest city in our country New York? New Haven, New London, New Orleans —we have many cities that begin with the adjective *new.* Why do you think John called the heavenly city New Jerusalem?

For Older Pupils. The Bible begins and ends with an allegory. The first book declares that the universe is God's work, and that this earth, notwithstanding its mysteries of sorrow and pain and death, is very good. The last book reveals a new earth where there shall be no more sorrow or pain or death, and a celestial city, with its water of life, in which there shall be no more night, for its light is the glory of God. Just before the sinking of the Lusitania, Mr. Charles Frohman said to a companion: "Why fear death? It is the most beautiful adventure of life." As I have thought about the new heaven and the new earth of the last chapters of the last book of the Bible, Mr. Frohman's words seem to echo the spirit of their message: "Why fear death? It is the most beautiful adventure of life. It is the entrance to the mansions which our Savior has gone to prepare for us, that where he is, there we may be also."

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I The Heavenly Home

The Desire to Know Heaven. Dr. Chalmers voiced the unspoken thought of almost everyone when he exclaimed: "Oh, if some island of the blessed could be loosed from its heavenly moorings and glide down the stream of time and pass by in our sight just one time, so that we might see the unflecked serenity of its skies, and inhale the fragrance of its flowers, and be ravished by the melodious strains of its music, and catch just one time the sheen of the apparel of its inhabitants!"

Picturing Heaven. However intensely we may believe that it is an inspiration which prompts men to believe in another life, we must admit that it is imagination which forces them to picture it. The picture varies with the ages, but certain metaphors hold their ground and perhaps will never be superseded. It is probably impossible for man to conceive a world entirely different from the only

one he knows. Attempts at such conception are purely intellectual and speculative. They do not give expression to religious faith. The assurance of the soul always finds expression in familiar imagery. "Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood" rise before our eyes, and the picture reflects the emotional hope of most men better than learned treatises embodying the newest forms of pseudo-scientific scholasticism can ever do.

All the descriptions of a life apart from the body are frankly metaphorical, whether their authors refer to life after death or to the experiences of dreams and visions. Heaven is depicted under the similitude of an abiding city from which death and pain and change are excluded, or reflected in the pastoral scenery of Palestine, fair pastures watered by the river of life, the leaves of whose trees are for the healing of the nations. In these fields we see those who "came out of great tribulations", and now walk dry-eyed beside the Psalmist's "waters of comfort". Plainly the writer had no thought that we could take him literally. His hope, his assurance, his emotions are facts, and he uses words as he might use colors because something forces him to express them. The dead live—that has been revealed to him. He must assert it by picturing their life. *The Spectator.*

There Shall be No Tears, No Sorrow, No Death.

"I hear thee speak of a better land;
Thou call'st its children a happy band;
Mother! oh where is that radiant shore?
Shall we not seek it and weep no more?
Is it where the flower of the orange blows,
And the fireflies dance through the myrtle boughs?"
"Not there, not there, my child!"

"Eye hath not seen it, my gentle boy;
Ear hath not heard its deep sounds of joy;
Dreams can not picture a world so fair,—
Sorrow and death may not enter there;
Time does not breathe on its fadeless bloom;
Far beyond the clouds and beyond the tomb,
It is there, it is there, my child!" —*Felicia D. Hemans.*

His servants shall Serve Him. "This is the most satisfying of all the avenues of vision into the heavenly state. It assures us, first of all, of *continuance*. Death is not an end of the activities and energies which have been consecrated to God. It is not the great breaking off it seems to us who stand around and see its work, but the setting free of old powers for new developments. If one looks back, it seems the end of a career; if forward, it seems a career's beginning: in reality it is neither, but an incident of continuous life. Those qualities which we recognize to inhere particularly in the soul or spirit of man attend him to the world beyond. Righteousness, love, justice, generosity, whatever he has had here, wherewith he can claim or offer to serve God, remains part of his personality, and finds its function in the life to come. Only all the limitations disappear by which they have been confined.

And there will not only be continuance, but also *completion*. Stagnation is as incompatible with the life that is lived in the heavenly city as it is with true life here. To represent heaven as a place of rest merely, is to present it as a place where men would be less truly men than before. Peace and fellowship with God do not exclude activity; rather must they stimulate it. Heaven means the bringing to maturity and perfection of these powers and energies which are only partially developed here. 'His servants shall do his service': in love without a grain of selfishness, in faith without a spasm of doubt, in knowledge without a shadow of uncertainty."

A group of young monks were being questioned upon the book of Revelation, so it is said, and were asked which promise or saying in the book was to him the most comforting. "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes", said one; "There shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying," said another; "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit down with me on my throne", said a third. But the youngest—Thomas à Kempis—answered, "His servants shall serve him."

Heaven Begins Here. Our great-grandfathers and great-grandmothers used to talk much about where heaven was. And some thought it was above the clouds, and others thought it would be here on earth, after all the wickedness and selfishness were done away. Every one, however, used to think that the New Jerusalem, with its pearly gates and golden streets, was a real place like the cities of today.

But we think of heaven more as the feeling in our hearts when we are happy from being with our friends, or when we have done right and unselfish things. We know what it is, then, to have heaven on earth. And when we have heaven on earth, we know pretty nearly what the real heaven is like.

Let me show you what I mean. Not long ago a speaker in a rescue mission asked the children if they could tell him where heaven was. Immediately a boy from the poorest section of the city sprang up, raised his hand and cried shrilly: "I know; I know". "Well, my boy, where is heaven?" the astonished leader asked. "Back in our street since mother got acquainted with Jesus," was the answer.

That boy was on the right track. Whenever Christ comes into the heart there comes with him love and thoughtfulness of others. And when we do kind things for others, we find happiness for ourselves, and that is heaven. Christ says, "If any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him and sup with him and he with me." That means, when we do things that we believe Christ would like to have us do, then he comes in to sup with us. And we feel Christ as our Companion, then it is heaven.

We may go to a beautiful place called heaven when we die, but it will be Christ who will make the place full of joy and gladness. And if we are to see him in that land and enjoy that heaven, we must first make a heaven here on earth for ourselves and others by trying to please him and to be like him every day. *Howard J. Chidley,* in *Fifty-two Story Talks.*

II The Ideal City

The Meaning of the City. The prophecy belongs to the life that now is as well as to the life that is to come. Divine inspiration is not only the greatest fact in life, but it is also the most practical. It is in this light that the Rev. Percy C. Ainsworth takes this vision, as he asks, what does the city stand for? It stands for human life with all its possibilities, its problems, and its pains, he answers. It stands for humanity in all its relationships—all its inner forces and all its outward forms. It stands for men and women, loving, toiling, hoping, sorrowing, suffering, sinning. O the message of the city and the need of it! The mention of the city makes us think of dark courts, houses in which our brothers and sisters ought never to live, the flaring yellow lights of the public-houses, men and women whom poverty and sin have bereft of all the joy of living, and who steer their lives by these flaring yellow lights, little children with disease in their bones and unveiled sin before their young eyes every day, a group of little fellows on the pavement with their heads clustered together over a washy sporting paper—and all the abominations and shames and pathos that Ruskin calls "the darkness of the terrible streets". I know as well as you do that that is not all. There is many a sweet and beautiful thing in the city. How could it be otherwise? But, for all that, take it all in all, a great city is the saddest place on God's earth; and the sadness and the sin that are found *there* are found in proportionate measure in all the places, even the seeming peaceful hamlets, where men dwell and work. "I, John, saw the holy city coming down from God out of heaven." But he saw a *holy* city, a city whose joys were clean joys, whose pleasures were pure pleasures, whose gains were honest gains, whose service was perfect freedom—a city whose citizens walked and worked in the light of God's face. Is not that what you and I say we want to see?

The holy city is not something to be longed for in the heavens of God, but something to be builded in the earth which is his also. "There shall be no night there." Why wait for heaven to interpret that for you? Is not the night the parable of all dark and evil things? No night there; then no night here—no slum, no drunkard, no gambler, no thief, no pauper, no libertine. That is not the final ideal for the age of the Spirit, but if you try to live up to that in your

prayer and faith and toil, you will, I think, be busy for some time to come and you will be well employed. *Condensed* from *The Pilgrim Church,* by *Percy C. Ainsworth.*

How the Ideal City will Come on Earth. The spirit of ungodliness, the acceptance and development of all the gifts of God, yet ignoring the Giver, has prevailed largely in the city life of the past, and it has worked the ruin of rich and powerful civilizations. The Apostle Paul in the first chapter of Romans makes very clear how the spirit of ungodliness brought upon the old empires shame, misery, destruction. "They reprobated the knowledge of God, and God gave them over to a reprobate mind", and then came the vices which turned their glory into shame and brought their greatness to the dust. The consciousness of God is the salt of our personal life, and the consciousness of God is the salt of our social and national life. National atheism, whether practical or theoretical, works national ruin. There is no adequate check then to our pride, our selfishness, our license. Without God, the more power we have the sooner we destroy ourselves; without God, the richer we are the sooner we rot.

In opposition to this, Christ brings into city life the element of spirituality. "Coming down out of heaven from God." It is in the recognition of the living God that Christ creates the fairer civilization. He puts into our heart assurance of God's existence, government, watchfulness, equity, faithfulness. It is comparatively easy to see God in nature, in the landscape, the sky, the sea, the sun, but Christ has brought God into the city, identified him with human life and interests and duties and joys and sorrows, and just as we accept and enforce the Divine element in city life, so shall our cities flourish in strength and happiness. We must recognize God's power and wisdom, his truth and justice, his holiness and love, that he is the God of love and peace, and consolation and hope and joy, if the life of the million is to be balanced, disciplined, pacified, perfected. We cannot do without God in the city—here where temptation is most bitter, pleasure most enticing, sorrow most tragical, where material is most abundant, opportunity most common, secrecy most practicable, passion most excited, where character suffers most fiery trial. Here can be no good thing except as we are kept in awe by God's majesty, comforted by his sympathy, strengthened by his government, inspired by his love. We can not build cities without God, and if we could they would fall to pieces again.

We read of this final metropolis, "The foundations of the wall were garnished with all manner of precious stones." Mark that not the walls, towers, domes, but the foundations are garnished with precious stones. If you would build a grand city, take care of the foundations, and do not put rotten rubbish in; begin to build with sapphire, sardonyx, amethyst, emerald, things just, true, pure, brotherly, kind, unselfish.

Some time ago, in one of the Reviews, a writer gave a picture of the London of the future, when all sanitary and political improvements shall have been perfected. No dust in the streets, no smoke in the air, no noise, no fog, spaces everywhere for flowers and sunlight, the sky above always pure, the Thames running below, a tide of silver; but think of the city of the future in whose life, laws, institutions, trade, politics, pleasure, the righteousness of Christ shall find full and final manifestation! Where is the poet, the painter, who shall paint for us that golden city, so holy and clean? It is painted for us here; it is the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.

We say sometimes, "God made the country, and man the town", but God will make the town before he finishes, and the town that he makes shall outshine all the glory of nature as much as living, immortal beings are beyond all material things. "A holy city"; why, it seems a contradiction in terms, but it shall come. I have walked in the silent streets of a city that flourished two thousand years ago, but I should like to see the city of two thousand years to come. No workhouses, no prisons, no dram-shops, no barracks, no policemen, no rags, no complaining in the streets. That city is already descending out of heaven from God.

Let our faith for the future be in Christ. The faith of Jesus Christ goes to the root of all the social evils which trouble us, and deals with them effectively. It can solve our problems, heal our maladies, soothe our sorrows, make us strong and pure. The truths in Christ are altogether constructive. Softly, silently,

but certainly, shall the doctrines of godliness, brotherhood, and righteousness work, until all vicious things shall be displaced and purged, and the whole body politic shall be built up of silver, gold, and precious stones. The faith of Christ, and his faith alone, can deal with, and restrain, and exalt the mighty, passionate life of our great cities. *Condensed* from *Noon Day Addresses* by *Dr. W. L. Watkinson.*

III The Lamb's Book of Life

How God Keeps This Book. When I was a boy my mother told me that God had a book in which he kept an account of all that I saw, heard, said and did. I used to wonder how God could find time to keep an account of all the little boys and girls. But since I have grown older I have ceased to wonder, for I have found out where and how he keeps this book. God keeps this book in a safe inside of our heads and we are his bookkeepers. Our brains are blank tablets and our senses are pencils that write on this tablet all that we see, hear, think, say and do. Every second we write a line, every minute a sentence, every hour a paragraph, every day a page, and every year a chapter. By the use of Memory we can turn back the pages and read all that has been written. We all love to hear Grandma read from this book the things that she wrote when a girl.

We cannot see or handle this book, neither can we erase or change what has been written. The Bible tells us that some day we must return this book to God who gave it and be judged according to the deeds recorded in it. Let us train our eyes to see the beautiful things, our ears to catch the good sounds, our brains to think the noble thoughts and our hands to do the kind deeds, and we will not be ashamed to give this book to God or be afraid to be judged by the things recorded in it. *R. Albert Goodwin,* in *The Congregationalist.*

We Are Our Own Recording Angels. We are assured by science that every fugitive movement registers itself, photographs itself, and in a sense becomes eternal. Is it a superstition to believe that the individual life makes its mark on the page of nature? We write our history in the book of our body. Yes, the body is a rubric, a story sternly recorded in red lines, partially seen even today. And in the book of conscience the deeds done in the body are recorded as by a diamond pen in the rock for ever. We are the recording angels of our own life.

"And the books were opened." The secret characters will blaze out, and we cannot deny our own handwriting and signature. Let me, then, by Divine grace, write my passport to the skies. How terrible to think of writing our own death warrant! *Dr. W. L. Watkinson,* in *The Gates of Dawn.*

They that are Written in the Lamb's Book of Life Shall Enter into the Holy City. If ever you are to come to the gates of that city, it must be by winning a victory compared with which every temporal achievement is but child's play. For the everlasting shelter and reward of that city are not for them whose hands are full, but for them whose hands are clean; not for them who have won honors, but for them who have learned humility; not for the successful, but for the unselfish; not for the clever, but for the faithful; not for them that have won the world as their prize, but for them that have overcome the world by the grace of that eternal life Christ giveth unto them that trust and follow him.

And we are here in this world to find that city, to obey the laws of it in our hearts every day, and to come to the glory of it all at the end of the days. What shall we say, we who are foolish of thought, weak of will, and sinful of heart—"I will go"? No, that is not enough. It was enough when our destination was the market-place, but it will never take us to the city of God. We must turn to One who came to us here that we might go to him there. We must ask for that strength that is folded in the forgiving love and renewing grace of God in Christ our Saviour. The Cross that stood at the end of his journey—the fulfillment of life—stands at the beginning of ours, the inspiration of life. And there we may learn to say, "I will go in the strength of the Lord". *Percy C. Ainsworth,* in *The Pilgrim Church.*

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

The reason Christian people are no happier than they are, the reason they

have so little power, is that they have such a misty conception of heaven, of the world to come. It is only those who by faith see eternal things, and feel the powers of the world to come, who can make any lasting impression for good in this world. *Dr. B. H. Carroll.*

By living lives that are true, by dealing with others in the spirit of brotherly kindness, are we helping to make the city of earth the city of God? Inspiration and strength for building the Lord's city are from God: do we seek them?

You remember John Bunyan's beautiful description of the Celestial City at the end of the first part of Pilgrim's Progress. Do you recall its closing words: "And after that they shut up the gates; which, when I had seen, I wished myself among them"?

Our Prayer. We are moving silently, day and night, toward that great realm of unrevealed light where thou, God, dwellest. And we pray that as we are drawing near to the hour that shall fix our joy and destiny, we may feel the shadow of thy wing over us. May our souls hear thine arousing voice. May thy truth be made mighty in us. And now we thank thee for the blessings of the day; for its lessons; for its comforts; for its enlightenment; and we pray that we may thus be carried from Sabbath to Sabbath, as from mountain-top to mountain-top, until the New Jerusalem shall appear, the joy of the whole earth. *Henry Ward Beecher.*

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. What are we doing to make our city better? See the Second Topic. Is that civic worker right who declared that "If your Christianity is not vigorous enough to do anything to help save this country and city, it is not vigorous enough to do anything toward saving you"? "There is nothing the matter with the Christianity here", he further said, "except that the incarnations of it are lazy and cowardly and think more of their personal comfort than they do of municipal decency." See the First Chapter of "American Social and Religious Conditions", by Charles Stelzle.

2. Your thought of heaven. See the First Topic.

WORK TO BE ASSIGNED FOR THE NEXT LESSON

Questions to Look Up. 1. When did Isaiah live? (*Guide,* p. 474.) 2. Describe the time of Isaiah. (*Guide,* p. 474.) 3. Who are "the people", verse 2? 4. What is the meaning of verse 2? 5. What is said about the joy of harvest in Ex. 23.16; Judges 9.27; Ps. 4.7; 126.6? 6. What is the meaning of verse 4? (*Guide,* p. 472.) 7. Explain the orientalisms of verse 4. (*Guide,* p. 473.) 8. What burdens from foreign oppressors did the Israelites suffer during the lifetime of Isaiah? (*Guide,* p. 472.) 9. What does Mt. 1.21 say shall be the name of the Christ Child, and why?

Questions to Think About. 1. With what is "walked" synonymous? 2. In what Psalm is the expression "the shadow of death" used? 3. Why are the two similes in verse 3 appropriate? 4. What is the reference to "the day of Midian"? 5. What three reasons for the joy of verse 3 are given? 6. Pick out the verbs in the perfect tense: do they refer to the past or to the future? Why is the perfect tense used? (*Guide,* p. 472.) 7. Has Isaiah's Messianic prophecy been fulfilled? (*Guide,* p. 474.) 8. Is Christianity an influence making for peace in the world today?

Memory and Note-Book Work. Memorize Isa. 9.2-7. Finish your account of the Book of Revelation by writing about its purpose, its message, its symbolism, and its lessons. Write what Revelation says about The Holy City.

A Note to You. Why not send this copy of the *Guide* to a missionary who will find it helpful? Dr. Samuel D. Price in an article in the *Sunday School Times* said: "Scores of copies of *Tarbell's Guide* were sent out in January. Such volumes are all but invaluable to the native preacher, furnishing material for sermons to be used in connection with his exhibition of the larger pictures now given out from our primary departments". Dr. Price also suggests that if you can study the last two lessons in advance and forward the book at once, the missionaries in the Philippines can receive it about the time the 1916 year's course is begun there, twelve months later than the date here.

CHRISTMAS LESSON—UNTO US A SON IS GIVEN

Golden Text

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Isaiah 9.6

LESSON Isaiah 9.2-7 (compare Hebrews 2.5-18) MEMORIZE verses 6, 7

2 The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined. 3 Thou hast multiplied the nation, thou hast increased their joy: they joy before thee according to the joy in harvest, as men rejoice when they divide the spoil. 4 For the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, thou hast broken as in the day of Midian. 5 For all the armor of the armed man in the tumult, and the garments rolled in blood, shall be for burning, for fuel of fire. 6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. 7 Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of Jehovah of hosts will perform this.

THE LESSON TEXT EXPLAINED AND ILLUMINED

THE LESSON OUTLINE

I. The Future Reign of Peace, 1-5.
II. The King upon whom the Peace Depends, 6, 7.

2. *The people.* Of Judah.—*Walked in darkness.* As described in Isa. 8.21, 22. *Walked* is here synonymous with *lived:* darkness is a metaphor for adversity. —*Have seen.* This is the prophetic perfect tense of the Hebrew verb: the light was yet to dawn, but so certain of it was the prophet that he speaks as though it had already come. In Mt. 4.15, 16, verses 1 and 2 are declared fulfilled in Jesus. "Isaiah speaks in these verses in general terms of the light of the new and glorious age shining upon that district which should be the first to suffer the affliction of conquest and captivity. When Christ, the true Giver of Righteousness, illumined that very same district, it was natural that the Evangelist should see the ultimate fulfillment of the prophecy which Isaiah, unconscious of the wonderful fulfillment which awaited his words, had uttered" (*Dummelow*). —*Shadow of death.* Or, *deep darkness.* Compare the same expression in the twenty-third Psalm.

3. *Hast multiplied....hast increased.* Prophetic perfect tense.—*Before thee.* As worshippers, recognizing God as the source of all blessings: compare Dt. 12.12.—*The joy in harvest.* When the ingathering is celebrated with feasting and dancing. Compare Ex. 23.16; Judges 9.27; Ps. 4.7; 126.6.—*When they divide the spoil.* When they are victorious in battle.

4. *The yoke of his burden.* The domination of Assyria, with its galling demand for tribute. "Some idea of the weight of the Assyrian yoke may be gathered from the fact that Menahem had to pay Tiglath-pileser a thousand talents of silver, or about a million, eight hundred thousand dollars, besides an annual tribute (2 K. 15.19) for the privilege of governing Israel; and Ahaz was obliged to purchase the right to call himself the servant of the same monarch with the entire contents of the public coffers (2 K. 16.8). Moreover, the Assyrian kings, according to their own testimony, were as cruel as they were avaricious" (*Mitchell*).—*The staff of his shoulder.* A reference to the taskmaster's staff whose blows fall upon the slave's shoulders. See Light from Oriental Life.—*The rod of his oppressor thou hast broken.* Assyria's domina-

tion over Judah shall be broken.—*As in the day of Midian.* The deliverance will be as sudden and glorious as when Gideon routed the host of Midian, Judges 7, 8.

5. *For.* Another reason for the joy of verse 3.—*All the armor of the armed man.* Or, *every boot of the booted warrior,* RVm.—*Shall be for burning.* Compare Ezek. 39.9: they that dwell in the cities of Israel shall go forth, and shall make fires of the weapons and burn them. The weapons of warfare are to be burnt because in the era of peace they will not be needed.

6. *For.* Still another cause for the joy of verse 3.—*Unto us.* Of our own race, of the house of David.—*A child is born.* Prophetic perfect tense, the birth is thought of as in the future. "How gentle the coming! Who would have had sufficient daring of imagination to conceive that God Almighty would have appeared among men as a little Child? We should have conceived something sensational, phenomenal, catastrophic, appalling! The most awful of the natural elements would have formed his retinue, and men would be chilled and frozen with fear. But he came as a little Child. The great God 'emptied himself'; he let in the light as our eyes were able to bear it" (*Jowett*).—*Wonderful, Counsellor.* Or, *Wonderful Counsellor,* RVm. The word *wonderful* with its cognates is often applied to God himself; compare 2 S. 29; 25.1.—*Everlasting Father.* Father for ever, his kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom, verse 7.—*Prince of Peace.* Compare Micah 5.5; Zech. 9.10.

7. *Upon the throne of David.* The king is to be of the lineage of David.—*From henceforth even for ever.* "The redemptive idea took different forms in different periods of Hebrew history. Toward the end of the monarchy, as in this passage, it assumed that of the expectation of an ideal king. This expectation was not fulfilled by any king who ever sat on the throne of David. In the literal sense, it was not fulfilled by Jesus. He fulfilled not this, or any other definite prediction; but the grand prophetic thought that underlay them all, and that had found more or less inspiring expression also among the Gentiles; and, as the supreme manifestation of the Divine in the human, he became the perfect Savior of universal humanity (1 Pet. 1.20). As for Isaiah, he must still be counted a prophet; because his teaching, though imperfect, was in line with what now appears to have been the Divine purpose, and therefore calculated to prepare his people for all the blessings of the old covenant, and finally for the advent of the incarnate Redeemer" (*Mitchell*).—*The zeal of Jehovah of hosts will perform this.* "The jealous love of God for his people is a guarantee of this."

LIGHT FROM ORIENTAL LIFE

4. *For the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, thou hast broken.* A Syrian (G. Howie) writing in *The Christian Herald,* thus explains these words.

A Syrian neighbor of ours felled a tree in a wood, three miles away, to be used in the construction of a house which he is building. The tree is about ten cubits long and eighteen inches in diameter. Four staves were fastened on it at equal distances from, and parallel with, each other. On a recent holiday, a score of friendly neighbors met in the wood, and eight of them shouldered the staves and proceeded along the rough and crooked paths. The carriers were relieved at intervals by their willing companions. In due time, the beam was brought to its destination and a feast followed, which the owner provided for his neighbors in recognition of their labor of love.

We always help each other in such matters. A comparatively light load is usually carried by means of a shoulder staff, shouldered by two men only. It is different, however, when the owner of the work is some local tyrant, a government officer or a foreigner who desires enormous blocks of stones or other heavy loads to be conveyed over the Syrian hills and across valleys to distant places. In such cases the task-master gives neither feasts nor wages, and is not slow to use the rod of the oppressor to force greater activity on the part of those who seem to him slow or languid.

The word translated "oppressor" (Isa. 9.4) signifies to us an overseer of men who are doing forced or unpaid work. In cases where the loads are heavy and bulky, the carrying staves are fastened below the back of the necks of the men along the upper part of the shoulders, thus painfully suggesting the yoke on the

necks of animals. The breaking of "yoke" and "staff" and "rod" means exchange of tyranny for justice and liberty. This is the sense of the passage as a whole.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The Prophet Isaiah. Isaiah was in many respects the greatest of all the prophets. He preached at Jerusalem during the last forty years of the eighth century, in the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah.

The Times of the Prophecy. The early chapters of the book of Isaiah deal with the perverseness of God's people and the judgment that is imminent because of their sins; then, after an account of Isaiah's vision and call, various prophecies follow, first about the Child Immanuel (7-14), and then about the birth and reign of the Prince of Peace, our lesson for today. This glimpse of a glorious future was given to the Kingdom of Judah at the very darkest of times, when oppressed by foreign invaders and under the leadership of incompetent rulers.

Isaiah's Prophecy of the Coming of the Child. In Canon Henson's words, there had been breathed from above into a patriot-prophet's mind the conviction that a Divine purpose was enshrined in the fortunes of Israel, and that world-wide destinies depended on the relatively petty events of his time. He idealized the nation, and drew from its prosaic experiences the materials of a sublime vision of the future. The triumph of right, certified surely by his own illuminated conscience, took shape in Isaiah's mind as a glorious national future. A time would come when the throne of David should be possessed by a monarch perfectly competent to realize Israel's Divine destiny, perfectly competent to accomplish Jehovah's purpose in Israel. This portrait of the Messianic King is like a glorious flower growing from an ash-heap; on every hand are the visible traces of the circumstances which historically determined its form, but the flower itself is sublimely greater than those historical circumstances require. This is no mere conqueror of Damascus or Assyria, no mere satisfactory, domestic ruler for a petty Oriental State, but an Object which draws the yearning homage of all mankind. This opens a vista of universal felicity; under the scepter of such a monarch humanity itself can rest.

Our Appreciation of the Prophecy. Dr. George Adam Smith has finely expressed our attitude toward the prophecy of Isaiah. "Men do not ask when they drink of a streamlet high up on the hills, 'Is this going to be a great river?' They are satisfied if it is water enough to quench their thirst. And so it was enough for Old Testament believers if they found in Isaiah's prophecy of a Deliverer—as they did find—what satisfied their own religious needs, without convincing them to what volumes it should swell. But this does not mean that in using these Old Testament prophecies we Christians should limit our enjoyment of them to the measure of the generation to whom they were addressed. To have known Christ must make the predictions of the Messiah different to a man. You cannot bring so infinite an ocean of blessing into historic connection with these generous, expansive intimations of the Old Testament without its passing into them. If we may use a rough figure, the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament are tidal rivers. They not only run, as we have seen, to their sea, which is Christ; they feel his reflex influence. It is not enough for a Christian to have followed the historical direction of the prophecies, or to have proved their connection with the New Testament as parts of one Divine harmony. Forced back by the fulness of meaning to which he has found their courses open, he returns to find the savor of the New Testament upon them, and that where he descended shallow and tortuous channels, with all the difficulties of historical exploration, he is borne back on full tides of worship. To use the appropriate words of Isaiah, 'the Lord is with him there, a place of broad rivers and streams' ".

A TEACHER-TRAINING THOUGHT FROM THE LESSON

They joy before thee according to the joy in harvest, exclaims Isaiah. The joy of harvest is one of the keenest of Christian joys, Dr. J. R. Miller reminds us. "It belongs to all who sow the gospel seed. They may never see the harvest, but they can safely rejoice in it all the same, for the Word of God never

misses of fruit in the end. The seed-sower may never see a convert; the reaper may gather the harvest years afterwards; but the sower's part is sure, and his reward safe in God's hand."

SUGGESTIONS FOR BEGINNING THE LESSON

For Younger Pupils.

"A Merry Christmas to everybody!
A Happy New Year to all the world!"

These were Dickens' exclamations, and I am sure they are yours today. The spirit of Christmas is in the air; it would be difficult to study any other than a Christmas lesson today, wouldn't it? From what book in the Bible is our lesson taken? Who was Isaiah? The beautiful part of his words is in our Golden Text. You recall that well-known stanza about the name of Jesus—

There is no name so dear on earth,
No name so sweet in heaven,
The name, before his wondrous birth,
To Christ the Savior given.

But these names for Jesus given in that far-away time are dear also. What are they?

For Older Pupils. For the last three weeks we have been studying the Book of Revelation. We have been looking forward for inspiration on our way, and have gained it from the thought of the Glorified Christ who knows where we dwell, and of the eternal city where we shall see our King and serve him joyfully. Today, the day before Christmas, we look backward to the promised first coming of our Lord as a little Child, and this backward glance also is full of inspiration for our lives.

Dr. F. B. Meyer describes the scenes which the early verses of our lesson call up. It is the harvest time, and the long patience of the husbandman has met with its reward. The fields are cleared of their precious spoils; the last of the sheaves, goldened by the glorious sunshine, has been carried to the barn, and throughout the countryside there is the joy of completed labors, fulfilled hopes, and plentiful provision against days to come. "They joy before thee according to the joy of harvest!"

The scene is changed. It is the close of that great struggle for freedom in which Gideon led his people against the hosts of Midian, which, like locusts, devoured the land. Bitter, indeed, had been the years of bondage, during which crops had been confiscated, homes pillaged, and thousands killed or enslaved. The exultation was, therefore, the more jubilant when the youngest son of Joash the Abiezrite, with his three hundred Ironsides, inaugurated a tide of victory, which rose and gathered force till Midian was driven over the frontier, suffering a defeat which paralyzed the nation for a century. Ah! What joy there was throughout the land! "Thou hast broken the yoke of his burden and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, as in the day of Midian."

Again the scene is changed, and the prophetic vision beholds that blessed hour when war itself shall die, after which the bugle will never again summon embattled hosts to meet in conflict, and the grass will never again be dyed with the rich blood of men, and nations shall never again be proud of victories won at the awful cost of their noblest sons. What a day that will be when museums shall be erected to preserve as curiosities the implements and accoutrements of war! The children of the New Era, which is soon to break, will find it hard to believe that men should ever have forced them to prey on the innocent and weak, or even on foemen of equal prowess. Then from vale to mountain peak, from river bank to ocean shore, shall ring out a note of joy so high, so resonant, that the very stars shall tremble in their silver spheres: "Hallelujah, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!"

LESSON TOPICS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

I Christmas Joy

Celebrating the Birthday of the Child. Christmas is the birthday of a Child, and a child is a simple, serene, and genial creature; therefore Christmas should be celebrated in a simple, serene and genial manner.

Many old-fashioned ways are to be deplored, as even those of us who are on the farther side of forty will admit; but the old-fashioned Christmas had a comparative simplicity and serenity about it—a warmth of sentiment and a genial quality—that made it a more fitting Child birthday than the Christmas that we know today. In those times any child who had known five Christmases in which, with wonder and worship, he had looked upon a tree with a star at the top and a Noah's ark below, for at least five more Christmases expected and desired unchanged the tree with its divinely mysterious star and its satisfactorily practical toy. Surely there are other birthdays—our own, for example—when we may be as perversely adult as we wish—when we may rush to a dance or to the theatre, or speed away in a motor car, or flit from house to house; but let the children celebrate the Child's birthday at home, at the hearth, near the cradle.

In the olden days it was a great thing to be a giver. One was so delightfully sure of making, and of being made, glad. In a little old diary, under the date of Christmas, 1876, a child wrote, "Christmas is the day when everybody else"—she modestly omitted herself—"seems more good than usual. Everybody liked my presents that I gave them. My other presents that I got were fine." Evidently the gifts that one gave were, *par excellence*, "my presents". The giving heart was elated, but none the less was the receiving heart softened and made humble.

A receiving heart of more recent date, put down at a table with pen and ink to write reluctant thanks to contributing relatives, began each of four epistles with, "I received twenty-five presents, and I think I fared pretty well"—followed by a formidable list of the twenty-five presents. The star and the Noah's ark are no longer enough. There is a tacit assumption that one who fares only "pretty well" this year may reasonably hope to fare better another. The child is growing shrewd—growing up; but if, with his greater stature and wider knowledge, he cannot, even for one day out of the three hundred and sixty-five, become as a little child, it were better that he cease to celebrate the birthday of the Child. *Youth's Companion.*

The Christmas Cry of the Heathen Children.

I hear the children crying in the night,
The little children, "God of stars and sun,
We do not like the darkness, send down light
From where there is so much to where there's none.
Fireflies and flowers we love, and all things bright,
But in our hearts it's dark; dear God, send light.

"A little Child we've heard thou once didst send,
Light to the heart of all the world to be,
And we believe, dear God, thou didst intend
Some light for little children such as we,
For what a Child can give a child can take,
Then give us light, dear God, for that Child's sake."

Bible Gleanings.

The First Christmas and This. All Christmas Day they had romped and played with one another, and when evening came they were tired enough to sit quietly before the fire and listen to the stories which Mother told. What a happy day it had been! Mother had just told the wonderful Christmas story of Bethlehem, as she always did at the end of Christmas Day, when Stewart asked, "Christmas Day now is not much like the first Christmas, is it"?

"There are many things that are like the first Christmas," answered Mother. "Here is one. Then you think of another, if you can. We put lights on the Christmas tree to remind us of what?"

"The Light of the Christmas Star!" answered Stewart. "I never thought of that before!"

"Yes, and you know the Babe of Bethlehem was often called 'The Light of the World', so the Christmas candles have more than one beautiful meaning, you see," said Mother. "Can you think of anything else?"

"Well", said Katharine, "we give presents to each other on that day. Is that because the Wise Men brought gifts?"

"Yes, that is good!" said Mother. "Also, the Babe of Bethlehem was a great Gift to the world. So on that day we give gifts, too."

"Mother," said little Katharine suddenly, "we can take something from Christmas Day right through the year with us, can't we? Not toys and dolls, for they do get broken, but Christmas—"

She was interrupted by a shout from the others as they all went happily off to bed.

"Christmas Love!"
"Christmas Peace!"
"Christmas Joy!"

they cried, and the Big Clock on the stairs seemed to say, "That's right! Tick-Tock! Tick-Tock! Tick-Tock! That's right! Tick-Tock! Tick-Tock!"

Somehow that Christmas Day seemed to last longer than any the children had ever known. When the toys and games were forgotten, they still kept in their hearts the spirit of Christmas Love, Peace and Joy. *Condensed* from *Picture Story Paper.*

II His Name Shall be Called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father

The Meaning of the Names. There is a certain connection between the first and second of these (Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God) which respectively lay stress on wisdom of plan and victorious energy of accomplishment, while the third and fourth ((Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace) are also connected, in that the former gathers into one great and tender name what Messiah is to his people, and the latter points to the character of his dominion throughout the whole earth.

"A wonder of a counsellor", as the words may be rendered, not only suggests his giving wholesome direction to his people, but, still more, the mystery of the wisdom which guides his plans. Truly, Jesus purposes wonders in the depth of his redeeming design. He intends to do great things, and to reach them by a road which none would have imagined. The counsel to save a world, and that by dying for it, is the miracle of miracles. "Who hath been his counsellor in that overwhelming wonder?" He needs no teacher; he is himself the teacher of all truth.

"The mighty God." Note that the word "mighty" implies victorious energy in battle. It is often applied to human heroes, and here carries warlike connotations, kindred with the previous picture of conflict and victory. Thus strength as of God, and, in some profound way, strength which is Divine, will be the hand obeying the brain that counsels wonder, and all his plans shall be effected by it.

He is the "Father of Eternity"—a name in which tender care and immortal life are marvellously blended. This King shall be in reality what, in old days, monarchs often called themselves and seldom were,—the Father of his people, with all the attributes of that sacred name, such as guidance, love, providing for his children's wants. Nor can Christians forget that Jesus is the source of life to them, and that the name has thus a deeper meaning. Further, he is possessed of eternity. If he is so closely related to God as the former name implies, that predicate is not wonderful. Dying men need and have an undying Christ. He is "the same yesterday, and today, and for ever". *Dr. Alexander Maclaren,* in *Expositions of Scripture.*

The Wonderful.

The Counseller? Not yet to Mary comes
That word, I think, he has such need of her.
The Mighty God? Ah, no, how can it, when
He is so small and weak he just can stir.
His head upon her breast? The Prince of Peace?
O sweet, spent mother, far too great that word!

She only knows the peace that wraps her round
Since first that baby cry of his was heard!
The Everlasting Father? That will come
Long, long years hence with comfort solemn, deep!
But now she murmurs only, "Little son!"
And moves to kiss him softly in his sleep.
One word alone of all the prophet spake
Is in her heart tonight, I think—just this—
The Wonderful! She says it o'er and o'er,
And breathes it yet again in every kiss!
Bertha Gerneaux Woods, in *Youth's Companion.*

What Christ is to Me. To me Christ is less an object of knowledge than of simple reverence and love. To me he is the Light of Light and God of God, very Light of very Light and very God of very God; to me he is Wonderful, the Counselor, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace; before him I bow, crying out as I look up to his thorn-crowned brow and spear-pierced side, My Lord and my God! I know no reverence that goes beyond the reverence I give to him; no love I ever knew goes beyond the love I want to offer him; there is no loyalty I have toward any being, seen or unseen, known or imagined, that transcends the loyalty I wish to pay him. He is my Lord, he is my Master. I am sorry I do not understand him better; I am sorry I do not love him more; I am sorry my capacity for reverence is so slight; I am sorry I follow him so far off; for he is my all and in all; I have no thought of God that runs beyond him; no reverence or affection that ever transcends or can transcend what I want to lay at his feet. *Dr. Lyman Abbott,* in *The Life that Really Is.*

III The Prince of Peace

Has the Great European War Discredited the Prince of Peace? It was in the seventeenth century that the peace-loving Hammond preached before Charles I a sermon on "The Christian's Obligations to Peace and Charity." "Blessed Lord," he exclaimed, "where is this promise of Christ's coming, this consequent of his birth and kingdom among men? For since swords came once into the world, since the sweet of revenge and the advantage of spoiling others was once tasted, since that bloody issue once began to break out, what hath all our Christianity done to stop or staunch it? Mahomet, who professed to propagate his religion by the sword, hath not brought such store of these bloody weapons, so rich a full-stocked artillery into the world, hath not kept them so constantly employed, so sharp-set, so riotous in their thirsts of blood, as hath been observable in Christendom."

Is Christianity an influence making for peace in the world today? At the present writing the terrible European war has been in progress nearly a year. Is it possible that peace will not have been declared by the time this lesson is studied? Possible, and yet inconceivable! At such a time as this, what shall one say about the lasting reign of peace upon earth which the Prince of Peace shall inaugurate? Ex-President Eliot of Harvard says, "For nineteen hundred years the ethics of Jesus of Nazareth have been in the world, but have had no effect to prevent or even reduce the evils of war, the greatest of evils which afflict mankind." To this the editor of Life comments: "One cannot reasonably complain that a medicine is not good when the patient doesn't take it. Governments have never adopted Christian ethics. Individuals have, and with good results. Even in the present war individuals are kind and humane. The very fact that most intelligent modern men find modern war intolerable is an evidence of the effect of Christian ethics upon the modern mind."

Mr. Edward S. Martin had an excellent article about "The Law of Peace", in a paper of the last Christmas season. "Not in the memory of the oldest men living has Christmas dawned in Christendom on a world in such a direful case," he writes. "It finds Europe ravaged by huge armies; full of rack, ruin, widows, weeping women, fatherless children. It finds wrath and deadly bitterness in the minds of men, and uncounted dead in numberless trenches on vaster battlefields than the world ever saw before. It finds cities battered and razed, and the most beautiful and precious memorials of the piety and art of times long past roofless, blackened, and defaced. From end to end of Europe terror

and destruction have stalked. Christian nations naturally related by strong ties of blood, faith, and commerce, have contended in a struggle of the deadliest and most bitter sort. To many of us who have watched these terrific proceedings from the safety of distance, they have brought not only profound agitation, but bewilderment. What, we say, is Christianity? Where is Christianity, that, in a continent understood to be permeated with it, such things can happen? Has it failed? Was our faith in it misplaced?

No, Christianity has not failed. It has been vindicated. That which has failed to keep peace is not Christianity, but something quite the opposite. It is the deification of force, and it has come to a natural and inevitable catastrophe.

No, it does not conflict. In the Golden Rule, and in all the teaching that went with it, Christ gave the great law of peace to the world, a great natural law like the law of gravitation, which always works, and by aid of which results can be predicted from known premises. Just as surely as there would be peace in a truly Christian world, there cannot long be peace in an un-Christian world. By as much as the Golden Rule is the law of world politics, there will be peace between the nations; by as much as the rule of grab and get governs, there will be war. Christ's laws would carry no authority if there were no penalty for the breach of them. But the penalty is sure, perpetual, inevitable. In some form every individual pays it now and again in his progress through life. In the terrible form of war most of Europe has been paying it this year, has paid it before a thousand times, may pay it still again and again, before the understanding of the law of Christ is clear enough, and the acceptance of the guidance of his spirit is general enough, to keep the world in peace."

My Prince of Peace. Are you restless and tossed with tempest and not comforted? Jesus is the Prince of Peace. He is in your heart, as formerly in the boat on the lake. Ask him to arise and bid the storm cease. Dare to believe that he will interfere and calm yourself. We must put the government where God the Father has placed it, on the shoulders of Jesus. It is there by right; but it must be there also by our choice and consent. Napoleon, standing amid the ambassadors of Europe, reassured the entire continent by the utterance of his New Year's motto, "The empire is peace". But with far greater truth may we apply the words to Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, whose rule over the soul is the synonym of peace unspeakable and full of glory. And as his government spreads farther and farther over the soul, with its growing area there is growing peace, until they shall both become complete to all the heights, and depths, and breadths of blessedness.

This may seem shadowy and far away; difficult, if not impossible, to realize in our life. But we may take comfort in the assurance that the zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform what we cannot accomplish. There is grace enough in him, and patience, and strength. He will not fail nor be discouraged. Hand over the entire matter to him; leave yourself in his hands; accept what he sends; do what he bids; and you will drink deep draughts of that joy which the prophet glowingly describes. From a recent *Sermon* by *Dr. F. M. Meyer.*

WHAT THE LESSON MEANS FOR US

"On the shoulders of Christ may the government of my thoughts and my affections and my energies be laid. It will mean something on my side—that I welcome his rule and respond to it loyally and gladly."

Our Prayer. O God, my Father, I remember the patient mother and rock-hewn manger in lowly Bethlehem where lay cradled thy Love for the world. Let the trusting, loving spirit of the Child steal into my life until it calms all anxious fears and soothes all bitterness and pain. In willing surrender and passionate longing let me take the Christ Child to my heart, that henceforth I may live as he lived, love as he loved, and, following in his footsteps, bring help to the needy, courage to the weak, comfort to the sorrowing, and hope to the lost. Amen! *Miss Margaret Slattery.*

SUBJECTS FOR BIBLE CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The Night Before Christmas in the City Square. See an account of community Christmas celebrations in *The Survey,* Dec. 5, 1914.
2. World peace. See "The Dreams of Christmastide", *Outlook,* Dec. 23, 1914.

CHRIST'S COMING AND COMING TO CHRIST (REVIEW)

Golden Text

The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And he that heareth, let him say Come. And he that is athirst, let him come: he that will, let him take the water of life freely. Revelation 22.17

READING LESSON Revelation 22.6-14, 16-21: verses 6-14 printed
MEMORIZE VERSES 12-14

A GENERAL REVIEW OF THE LAST SIX CHAPTERS OF ACTS

See directions on page 148.

Lesson I. One night after his arrest in Jerusalem, Paul heard God's voice saying to him, "Be of good cheer: for as thou hast testified concerning me at Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome." At that time forty Jews bound themselves by an oath not to eat nor drink till they had killed Paul. They went to the members of the Sanhedrin and asked them to send for Paul on the pretext that they would examine him again, purposing themselves to kill him on the way. Paul's nephew heard of the plot and reported it to Paul. Paul had the young man brought before the chief captain, and when the latter had heard the story he at once gave orders to two centurions to start for Cæsarea with Paul at nine o'clock that night. They were directed to take a large guard with them—two hundred soldiers, seventy horsemen, and two hundred spearmen—and to deliver him safely to Felix.

With the company the chief captain sent a letter to Felix, explaining what had happened, and stating that Paul had done nothing worthy of death or imprisonment, but was sent to Felix to escape the plot of the Jews against his life; Paul's accusers, the captain added, had been ordered to appear before Felix. The captain's orders were carried out, and Paul was brought in safety to Felix, who had him kept under guard in Herod's palace till his accusers arrived.

Five days later members of the Sanhedrin, with a lawyer named Tertullus, appeared against Paul. At the hearing Tertullus made the first speech. After words of flattery to the Governor, he charged Paul with being a mover of insurrections among the Jews throughout the world, a ringleader of the Sect of the Nazarenes, and a profaner of the temple.

Lesson II. Paul then made his defense. Because of the Governor's knowledge of his nation, he spoke with more confidence, he said, for Felix would know that the first charge was false, as it was now only twelve days since he first went to Jerusalem to worship, and neither in the temple nor in the city had he collected a crowd. That he served the God of his fathers after the Way which they called sect, he acknowledged, but he believed the Law and the Prophets, and he had the same hope as they that there should be a resurrection of the just and unjust. He strove at all times to have a clear conscience toward God and men. After an absence of some years he had come to bring gifts to his nation; the Jews had found him in the temple engaged in a Jewish rite, without a crowd. There were Jews from Asia—who ought to appear there against him, if they had anything with which to charge him. Those who had come could repeat against him only his one sentence in regard to the resurrection of the dead.

Felix said he would give his decision when Lysias the chief captain came. Meanwhile he ordered Paul kept under guard, but permitted him to see his friends.

Some days later Felix came again to see Paul, this time with his wife Drusilla, anl Paul talked to him about righteousness, self-control and the coming judgment. Felix was terrified, and said he would hear him again when convenient. Felix hoped to receive a bribe for his release, and

often sent for Paul, but at the end of two years, when he was succeeded by Festus, he left him in prison so as to gain favor with the Jews.

Lesson III. The Jews appealed to Festus as soon as he came to Jerusalem to have Paul brought there for a trial, for they would have him killed on the way, but Festus said he would try him at Cæsarea. The trial took place there, and his accusers could not prove their charges. To please the Jews Festus asked Paul if he would go to Jerusalem for a public trial, and Paul then as a Roman citizen appealed to Cæsar. "Unto Cæsar shalt thou go," said Festus.

Some days afterwards King Agrippa and Bernice made a visit to the new Governor, and Festus told them about Paul. Upon the king's expressing a wish to hear him himself, Festus arranged a public interview for the next day. On that occasion Festus declared that he had found no fault in Paul, and had asked King Agrippa to hear him in order to know what to write to Cæsar.

Lesson IV. Agrippa asked Paul to speak. As before, Paul told of his life as a Pharisee, his persecution of the Christians, and of his wonderful conversion on the way to Damascus, where he had been told that he was to be a light to the Gentiles. "To that vision on the way to Damascus I was not disobedient," Paul cried. "First those at Damascus and at Jerusalem and throughout Judea, and then the Gentiles, I exhorted to repent and do works worthy of repentance. This is why the Jews would take my life, but I have received help from God, and thus I stand and bear my testimony, adding nothing to what Moses and the prophets said, that the Christ must suffer and by his resurrection from the dead proclaim light to the Jews and to the Gentiles."

"You are mad, Paul, your great learning has made you mad," Festus interrupted. "I am not mad, most excellent Festus," Paul returned, "but I speak words of truth and soberness, as the King knows." Then turning to Agrippa Paul said, "King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know you do." Scornfully Agrippa returned, "With very little persuasion you think to make me a Christian." "Whether with little or much persuasion," nobly answered Paul, "I would that you and all these here were such as I am, save these chains."

At a consultation among themselves, Agrippa declared that Paul had not been guilty of anything deserving death or imprisonment, and had he not appealed to Cæsar he might have been set at liberty.

It was decided to send Paul to Italy, and with other prisoners he was given into the care of a centurion named Julius. They boarded a ship bound for the ports of Asia. The ship stopped at Sidon, and Julius allowed Paul to visit his friends there. Putting to sea again they sailed to Myra in Lycia. There the centurion found an Alexandrian ship bound for Italy and embarged with it. The wind was unfavorable, and after sailing slowly as far as Cnidus they were obliged to change their course. They sailed around Crete and landed at Fair Havens. Sailing was now dangerous, and Paul warned them that a further voyage would imperil life and property. The captain was anxious to leave, however, as the harbor was not a good one in which to spend the winter, and it was decided to go on to Phœnix.

Lesson V. A favorable wind sprang up from the south and they set sail. Then followed a hurricane that blew across the island from the north, and the ship was driven before it. Under the lee of the small island of Cauda they managed to hoist on board the boat that was floating behind, and to undergird the ship. Fearing they would drift far south on to the Syrtis Sands they lowered sail. The next day they threw part of the cargo overboard, and the day after the ship's tackling. For many days neither sun nor stars shone, and the tempest continued till all hope of being saved was given up. Then Paul came forward and said: "You know that I warned you not to sail from Crete, and now I urge you to be of good cheer, for an angel of God has assured me that I must stand before Cæsar, and has promised me that the lives of all shall be spared, but we shall be cast upon an island."

The fourteenth night after the beginning of the storm they were drifting about in the Adriatic Sea when at midnight the sailors thought land was near. They took soundings twice and found the water was getting shallower, and then anchored for the night lest they be driven upon a rocky coast. Paul discovered that the sailors had lowered the boat and

were about to make their escape, and warned the centurion. At his command the soldiers cut away the boat. Then Paul urged them all to eat, and when he offered thanks and began eating himself they took heart and ate also. There were seventy-six in all on board. They then lightened the ship by throwing the grain overboard, and waited for daylight.

Lesson VI. Morning dawned. What the land before them was they did not know, but they saw a beach and determined to run the ship upon it. In a place where two seas met, the ship ran aground, the bow held fast, and the stern was quickly broken up by the force of the waves. The soldiers wished to kill the prisoners lest they should escape, but the centurion would not permit this, and ordered all who could swim to jump overboard, and those who could not to follow on planks and broken pieces of the ship. All safely reached the shore, which proved to be the island of Malta.

It was raining and cold, and the people of Malta built a fire. Paul gathered sticks for it, and when a viper, driven out by the heat, fastened on his hand, the natives said one to another, "This man must be a murderer, for though he has been saved from the sea, Justice does not allow him to live." Paul shook the creature into the fire, and when they saw that he did not fall down dead and that no harm of any sort came to him, they changed their minds and said that he was a god. Publius, the governor of the island, received and entertained them for three days. It happened that the father of Publius was taken ill, and Paul cured him, and after that all the people of the island who were ill were brought to him and were cured. When the time came to leave the island, the people put on board what was needed for the voyage.

Lesson VIII. After three months had been spent on the island, the centurion and his company set sail for Italy in an Alexandrian ship, whose figurehead was the Twin Brothers. The ship touched at Syracuse, where three days were spent, and again at Rhegium. When it reached Puteoli Paul and his company tarried a week and then continued the journey on foot to Rome. At the Market of Appius and at the Three Taverns Paul was met by brethren who had come from Rome to greet him, and on seeing them he thanked God and took courage. When Rome was reached, Paul was allowed to live by himself under guard of a soldier.

Three days after his arrival, Paul sent for the Jews. He told them that he had done nothing contrary to the customs of their nation, but had been handed over to the Romans as a prisoner, by whom he would have been released had he not been forced to appeal to Cæsar because of the hostility of the Jews, and he further told them that it was because of the hope of Israel that he was bound with a chain. The Jews replied that no word had come to them from Jerusalem, and they would be glad to hear what he had to say about this sect, against which they had heard evil things said.

A day was appointed for the conference. The Jews came in great numbers, and from morning till evening Paul tried to convince them about Jesus from arguments drawn from the law of Moses and the prophets. Some were inclined to believe what he said, and others rejected his teaching. When they disagreed and were about to depart, Paul told them that Isaiah the prophet had spoken truly when he said they would not hear. "Be it known unto you," he then solemnly declared, "that this salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and they will hear."

For two years Paul lived in his own house and with perfect freedom and boldness taught all who came to him about the kingdom of God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

A REVIEW BY MEANS OF ALLUSIONS

See directions on p. 150. The allusions below cover the year's work. If you prefer to limit your review to the last quarter, make the right selection.

I explained that these were essays adding, "I think that is a new word to you. Shall I explain it?" "Oh, no," said Benny, "I've read about 'em in the Bible." Somewhat surprised, I asked in what part of Scripture he had found this allusion. He at once explained that it said the man from Ethiopa was "settin' in his carriage readin' essays." *Annie Trumbull Slosson.*

When the messenger of an unexpected blessing takes you by the hand and lifts you up and bids you walk, you may leap and run and sing for joy. *Dr. Van Dyke.*

"The Lord cometh" was their watchword, and in the strength of that mighty hope they went everywhere preaching the Word and turning the world upside down. *J. D. Jones.*

I hear thee behind me saying: "Write
In a book the things that thou hast seen,
The things that are, and that have been,
And the things that shall hereafter be!" *Longfellow.*

Strike not my name off the roll-call of the noble and victorious army, which is the blessed company of all faithful people; and let me, too, be found written in the book of life; even though I stand the lowest and last upon its list. *Charles Kingsley.*

The Roman Empire was won for Christ, not by the overflowing vent in the gift of tongues, but in the abiding faithfulness of Christian principles on the part of genuine believers. *Dr. Frank Ballard.*

The pioneer missionary in overcoming obstacles and difficulties has the privilege not only of knowing Christ and the power of his resurrection, but also something of the fellowship of his suffering. *Dr. Zwemer.*

The clashing of creeds, and the strife
Of their many beliefs, that in vain
Perplex man's heart and brain,
Are naught but the rustle of leaves,
When the breath of God upheaves
The boughs of the Tree of Life. *Longfellow.*

We, first of all, behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord, and are changed into the same image from glory to glory, and then we are to go forth and act out what we have seen, so that everywhere it will be acknowledged that we are, indeed, the people of God. *W. J. Erdman.*

This convent on the rocky crest
Of the Calabrian hills, to me
A Patmos is wherein I rest. *Longfellow.*

If the mercies of God have blessedly beset us, let us not build three tabernacles that we may abide, but rather call the place where our mercies meet us Three Taverns, and then, like Paul, push on, thank God, and take courage. *Dr. Babcock.*

When Death, the Healer, shall have touched our eyes
With moist clay of the grave, then shall we see
The truth as we have never yet beheld it.
But he that overcometh shall not be
Hurt of the second death. *Longfellow.*

"There stood a man of Belgium saying, 'Come over and help us,' and immediately men of Britain arose to answer the call."

A friend wrote to David Livingstone: "May your name be propitious; in all your long and weary journeys may the *Living* half of your title outweigh the other; till after long and blessed labors, the white stone is given you in the other land.'"

Fergus had a deeply ingrained conviction that no man should think more highly of himself than he ought to think, and lost no opportunity of reducing bumps of self-esteem, whenever discovered. *David Grayson.*

If the Puritans were unacquainted with the works of philosophers and poets, they were deeply read in the oracles of God. If their names were not found in the registers of heralds, they were recorded in the Book of Life. *Macaulay.*

"Earth breaks up, time drops away,
In flows heaven, with its new day
Of endless life, when he who trod,
Very man and very God,

This earth in weakness, shame and pain,
Dying the death whose signs remain
Up yonder on the accursed tree—
Shall come again, no more to be
Of captivity the thrall,
But the one God, All in All,
King of kings, Lord of lords,
As his servant John received the words,
'I died and live for evermore!'" *Browning.*

A PICTURE REVIEW FOR YOUNG PUPILS

Before class-time have the pictures on the next page copied upon your blackboard. Each picture should be covered with a piece of paper attached at the top by paste so that it can be quickly removed. Tear off one paper at a time, and question your pupils about the lesson which the picture recalls.

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER PUPILS

1. How was Paul cheered while in prison at Jerusalem? 2. Why was he sent to Cæsarea? 3. How long was he imprisoned at Cæsarea? 4. About what did he talk to Felix, and what was Felix' answer? 5. What answer did Paul make when Agrippa said that Paul wished to make him a Christian? 6. Why did Paul ask to be sent for trial to Cæsar? 7. At what island did the ship stop on which Paul was being taken to Rome? 8. What happened after they left Fair Havens? 9. Where did the shipwreck occur? 10. How did all escape? 11. What encouraged Paul when he was nearing Rome? 12. What did he tell the Jews of Rome? 13. What were some of the things that Paul said he had endured when he wrote to the Corinthians the story of his life? 14. How had he endured them?

REVIEW QUESTIONS FOR OLDER PUPILS

1. By what method did Paul try to create a friendly feeling between the Jewish and Gentile churches? 2. What caused his arrest at Jerusalem while trying to carry it out? 3. What plot was formed against his life, and how was it foiled? 4. Who was Felix and how did he regard Paul? 5. Why did Felix leave Paul in prison? 6. Who were Festus and Agrippa? 7. What did each of them say to Paul while he was making his defence before them? 8. Why was Paul sent to Rome? 9. Describe the course of Paul on his way to Rome. 10. What happened at Fair Havens, and at Melita? 11. What spirit did Paul show on the way from Jerusalem to Rome? 12. Why was it best for Paul to go to Rome? 13. Which one of the quarter's lessons has been most helpful to you? Why? 14. What city was the cradle of Gentile Christianity? 15. What city was the birthplace of Christian missions? 16. In what great cities have our lesson scenes been this year?

A REVIEW OF VERSES

Repeat (or write) the verses which—

1. Affirms a good conscience. 2. Makes an appeal to Cæsar. 3. Begins, For the Kingdom of God is not eating. 4. Describes the Holy City. 5. Begins, Wherefore, O king Agrippa, I was. 6. Records the last information given about Paul in the Acts. 7. Answers Festus' declaration that Paul was mad. 8. Gives the benediction in the first chapter of Revelation. 9. Begins, It is good not to eat. 10. Speaks about Paul's standing before Cæsar. 11. Begins, With but little persuasion. 12. Tells about overcoming. 13. Begins, So, then, let us follow after. 14. Gives Paul's retort to Agrippa's observation about Paul's wish to make him a Christian. 15. Speaks about being faithful unto death. 16. Gives Paul's words about sacrifice. 17. Begins, I am the Alpha. 18. Tells how Paul said one should not regard himself.

A REVIEW OF PAUL'S TEACHINGS

In what lesson and what did Paul teach in regard to—

1. The nearness of God? 2. The worship of God? 3. Obedience to God? 4. Trusting God? 5. God's witness of himself to the heathen nations? 6. The Kingdom of God? 7. The purpose of life? 8. The relation of Christianity to Judaism? 9. Repentance? 10. Salvation? 11. The resurrection? 12. The re-

I
A GOOD CONSCIENCE
II
I APPEAL
III
IV
V
THE HOLY CITY
XII
Wonderful Counsellor Mighty God Everlasting Father Prince of Peace
XIII
He that will, let him take the water of life freely.
Rev. 22.17.
XIV
A Crown of Life
XI
I AM THE FIRST AND THE LAST
X
A LIVING SACRIFICE
IX
AT ROME
VIII
VII
VI

ward of righteousness? 13. The Judgment? 14. Steadfastness of faith? 15. Conscience? 16. Respect for rulers? 17. Temperance? 18. Self-sacrifice? 19. Service? 20. Rights? 21. Love? 22. Giving? 23. Charity without love? 24. Judging others? 25. Boasting? 26. Responsibility for others? 27. Use of trouble?

A REVIEW OF THE BOOK OF ACTS

1. How many chapters has the book of Acts? 2. With what event does it begin? 3. With what does it close? 4. About how many years does its history cover?

5. What city was the scene of the first seven chapters? 6. What may this period be called? 7. About how many years does it cover? 8. Who is the leader? 9. To what nation is Christianity limited?

10. Where is the scene of chapters 8-12? 11. What may this period be called? 12. How many years does it cover? 13. Who are the leaders? 14. To what Gentiles is the Gospel preached?

15. In what countries do the events of the last sixteen chapters occur? 16. What may this period be called? 17. How many years does it cover? 18. Who is the leader? 19. To whom is the gospel preached?

A REVIEW OF NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS

1. How many books are there in the New Testament? 2. Name them. 3. By how many authors were they written? 4. Which author was a Gentile? 5. Which authors were among the twelve apostles? 6. Who were probably brothers of Jesus?

7. Who were the Evangelists, and why were they so called? 8. What is the theme of the Gospels?

9. What is the historical book called? 10. Who wrote it? 11. What other New Testament books did the author of the Acts write? 12. What is the purpose of the Acts? 13. When was it probably written?

14. How many Epistles are there in the New Testament? 15. Name them in the order in which they are printed. 16. Which is the longest one? 17. Which is the shortest? 18. Which has only one chapter? 19. Which are addressed to churches? 20. Which to individuals?

21. How many letters were probably written by Paul? 22. Name them in the order printed. 23. Name them in the probable order in which they were written. 24. What is the relation of the Pauline Epistles to the Acts? 25. Which were written during Paul's second missionary journey? 26. Which during his third missionary journey? 27. Which during his imprisonment at Rome? 28. Which probably between his first and second imprisonment at Rome? 29. What led Paul to write his two letters to the Thessalonians? 30. His two letters to the Corinthians? 31. His letter to the Romans? 32. What were the probable date and place of writing of each of the Epistles from which we have had lessons? 33. What were the purpose and character of each? 34. Who wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews? 35. What is its purpose? 36. Name the General Epistles. 37. Who wrote Revelation? 38. What is its character? 39. What are its lessons for us?

40. Where in the Bible will you find the "Ascension Chapter"? 41. The "Pentecost Chapter"? 42. The chapter about Stephen? 43. The chapter about Paul's conversion? 44. The great chapter about love? 45. The chapter about the New Jerusalem?

SUBJECTS FOR ESSAYS

1. The Persecution under Nero.
2. Rome in Paul's Day.
3. The Cities of the Acts.
4. Twelve Prominent Workers in the Acts.
5. Paul's Life from the Time he Left Jerusalem until he Reached Rome.
6. Felix, Festus, and Agrippa: a Study in Character.
7. Paul's Friends.
8. Paul's Enemies.
9. What Paul Accomplished.
10. An Appreciation of Paul.

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